

THE BOAT PUSHED SLOWLY OUT.

Talbot, Charles Remington

11

THE STORY OF HONOR BRIGHT.

BY

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"AUTHOR OF ROYAL LOWRIE; OR, A GENERAL MISUNDERSTANDING."

ILLUSTRATED BY

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CONTENTS.

CHAPTER.	PAGE.
1. — On board the Sound Steamer	9
2. — Thomas Ruggles, Farmer	27
3. — The beginning of the longest day in the Year	39
4. — What was the fault with Black Doug- las	50
5. — Ruggles gets a place	68
6. — In which the Story does not get on	85
7. — On Mizpah	94
8. — The Fly-Leaf	116
9. — In which the Heroine appears to greater disadvantage than ever	128
10. — Wherein Truth is no less exciting than Fiction	143
11. — Densie Drew	156
12. — Miss Drew unearths a mystery	172
13. — The Witchery of Archery	190

14. — A Chance Shot	210
15. — Sheets and Pillow-cases	227
16. — What has become of Angus	249
17. — Circumstantial Evidence	267
18. — By the light of the Moon	287
19. — In the West Passage	302
20. — A Revelation	324
21. — A Change of Scenes	341
22. — On board the Curlew	362
23. — Densie's Tactics	378
24. — Victor or Vanquished	389

THE STORY OF HONOR BRIGHT.

CHAPTER I.

ON BOARD THE SOUND STEAMER.

THIS story is not meant to be a sensational one, although appearances may now and then be against it. Its hero, in his fifteenth year, did what many another boy with a will and temper of his own has done—he got into a towering rage with his guardian, flung his Harkness' First Greek Book into the farthest corner of the room, went up-stairs and put on two pairs of trowsers and a base-ball shirt, and, coming down again by and by much more quietly than he had gone up, let himself out at the side-door and literally "ran away to sea." He was six months on board ship and upwards of two years in Colorado and New Mexico, during which time he was knocked about a good deal. But there was the

making of a man in him; and when at last he found his way East again, although not quite so cultivated perhaps as he might have been



IN A TOWERING RAGE.

had he stayed at home, he had developed, body and mind, in a hundred ways that he will be more and more thankful for every year that he lives. He is in the Freshman class of Harvard College at this moment, while other lads of his age are Seniors; but I am quite sure he has no feeling that he has *lost* any time anywhere. His races are yet to be pulled and his lectures yet to be crammed, it is true, but he will pull a better oar and strike a higher mark for those two years and a half of "roughing it." Meanwhile, during his absence, the people and things he had run away from had not stood still. He found them and his relations to them changed altogether. Whereupon he said and did just what, it seems to me, just such a person might naturally say and do under just such circumstances. And that is what all this story is about. It is the writer's purpose simply to tell that story in an honest and straightforward fashion; and he hopes that the young people who read it will find in it something that will help and nothing that will hurt them. So much by way of preface.

A coarse, ready-made suit of clothes, with a flannel shirt visible at the neck, a worn black hat with opinions of its own as to shape, stout shoes of no mean

dimensions and not altogether clean, hands that evidently had worked hard at something, a face tanned far deeper than a month's yachting trip or a vacation tramp to the mountains could have tanned it, hair that, however fine and curly it might be, did need cutting most dreadfully, a certain air of freshness which might have been mistaken for verdancy but was not — let the reader put all these together in his mind's eye and attach them to a young fellow seventeen or eighteen years of age, and he has the person who is to figure most extensively in the following chapters.

The picture is not, it must be confessed, all that a fastidious taste could desire. This is quite clear from the manner of a pretty and stylish young lady who had just come out upon the forward deck, and who found herself, all at once, close beside the person thus described. Her glance rested upon him rather coldly for a single instant, and then, quite decidedly, she turned away and walked farther down the rail, taking with her the only seat that seemed to be still unsecured. It was a time of cheap travel and crowded boats, and a great many people had already come out upon the deck.

"Angus," she called to a boy in knee-breeches and a man-o'-war's-man's cap, who had come out with her

from the saloon. "Come and sit down, do. You must be tired to death. Here, I'll give you half my stool."

The last words were uttered a little wrathfully, and perhaps she was not unwilling they should be overheard by the common-looking person who was sitting there so comfortably in one chair with his feet upon another.

The common-looking person did hear her. Indeed, what she now said had called his attention to her for the first time. He had been gazing absently across the dock to where the steamer of another line was also making ready for departure. He looked around, and then jumped up quickly and came forward, bringing one of the chairs with him.

"I beg pardon"—He took off his hat a trifle awkwardly like a gentleman "born not made," and proffered the chair. "Will you take this? I did not notice."

She took it coolly, thanking him without deigning to look at him. And he was about to go back when something stopped him.

"Honor—Honor Bright! Where in the world—Oh, here they are, Mrs. Murdoch!"

The words or the voice or both, seemed to have an unusual effect upon the youth with the tanned

face. He started as though he had been shot at, and, turning quickly, stood looking toward the newcomer with an air of the most complete astonishment. As for this latter person, he stepped forward at once, a faultlessly attired young gentleman with an effeminate air exactly in keeping with his voice. A fashionably dressed lady was close behind him.

"We thought you were going with us to find the state-rooms," said this first person as he came up. "We have been looking for you everywhere we could think of, and could not imagine where you had flown to. I told Mrs. Murdoch —". He was going on volubly, making a great many words apparently out of a very little matter, when the pretty and stylish young lady interrupted him, speaking in a lower voice, but with an energy and intensity quite in contrast with his languid drawl.

"I do wish, Livingston Mauran, that you wouldn't go all over the boat calling out my name as though I were a lost child and you the town crier. Never mind! Don't apologize —" She stopped his attempted reply with an imperious gesture, as though it were much easier to imagine what he had to say than to listen to it. "Now please go and get a chair for Caroline. Quick, before they are all gone."

Young Mauran looked helplessly about, quite at a



NOT ALL A FASTIDIOUS TASTE COULD DESIRE.

loss to know where the extra chair was to be obtained ; but the person in the ready-made clothes now came forward once more, offering the other chair. The young lady, however, had had enough of this.

"Thank you," she said politely, but as freezingly as ever. "We could not think of taking your other seat. We have a stool and a chair already. Livingstone, you and Angus must look out for yourselves."

"The chair will be much better than the stool," said the stranger simply, not heeding her words or manner at all. "And I do not care for it." And he put on his hat again and walked away aft before another word could be said.

Then the bell rang once more, and a pompous negro came around with a warning cry of "All ashore 't don't go;" and presently the boat pushed slowly out of the dock and turned with gradually increasing speed southward. It was a pleasant June evening, and, although the day had been very hot, a cool breeze was now coming in from seaward. The party that has thus been brought to the reader's notice sat for a long time enjoying the sail down around the Battery, under the East River bridge, far up between the two busy cities, past Blackwell's Island and on toward the Hell Gate. And to any one sitting near them, with nothing better to do, it would have been quite a

natural thing to watch them more or less closely — as we all do watch groups of strangers who are our fellow-travellers — and listen at times to what they were saying.

An experienced observer would at once have written them down as New England people rather than New Yorkers — people of refinement and probably of wealth and position. It was the youth so emphatically addressed upon his first appearance as Livingston Mauran, who, more than any other in the group, called attention to himself. He talked almost constantly, after the manner of those whose thoughts, never very profound perhaps, seem necessarily to run to words — and with a drawling though not at all disagreeable tone, and with an airy indifference to the strangers about him that was amusing. His face was fresh and good-looking, there was the faint promise of a blonde moustache on his upper lip, and he wore a sacque suit of a somewhat loud plaid, and a cherry-colored ribbon on his straw hat. As one watched him sitting there with his arm on the rail, twirling a lady's parasol and rattling on to his two companions about Point Judith, and the furniture of a hotel where they had dined, and the propriety of lining parasols with old gold, and the newest fashion for holding one's fan, and a thousand other things of varying

importance, one set him down presently as a perfectly good-natured, rather light-headed young gentleman, fond of ladies' society, and who had been well fed, well dressed, and well cared for all his life. Of course it was possible that one might find more than this in him, if one came to know him better.

The two ladies appeared to be sisters, the one a married woman of the world, and the other a young girl who might have been sixteen and might have been eighteen years of age, and who (as came out from the conversation) had just "finished" at a Pennsylvania boarding school. She was a brunette, bright and charming, but evidently quick-tempered and accustomed to having her own way.

As for master Angus, son of one of these ladies and nephew of the other, he was about rather than of the group. He was a robust young American of Scotch descent, full of health and activity, one of those enterprising, well-looking, jauntily clothed children that one always notices and feels attracted to when travelling. He, as well as these others, will have more or less to do with the following story, and may very properly therefore, as well as they, be described at its outset.

Later in the evening, when the lamps were all lighted and everybody who could afford it had long

since been down to supper, the young fellow first above mentioned — he of the ready-made suit of clothes — came in from the after-deck (it was growing too cool to sit outside) and began looking about to find a seat. This was no easy matter. The cabin already presented something of that interesting appearance so familiar to travellers in the season of "limited tickets." There were people sitting near the lamps and reading, and people sitting and talking together, and people walking up and down the saloons from one end of the boat to the other; but the majority seemed already to have grown sleepy, and in the chairs all about and on the tops of the radiators and on the floor along the passage-ways and in corners, some with mattresses and many without, people were lying in all sorts of attitudes and trying to sleep. There were evidently a great many more passengers on board than there were beds.

A gentleman who had been reading his paper near one of the tables arose and left his place just as the young fellow who had twice before this so readily given up his own seat was passing, and the latter secured now the empty chair just as two other persons as needy as himself had suddenly started in its direction.

"I'm mighty glad *you* got it!" a voice said close beside him.

He turned and saw the boy in the sailor cap. He had on now in addition a boy's ulster that came almost to his heels.

"Are you?" was the response to this remark.

"Yes — 'cause you gave up your seat to aunt Honor, before supper. She said 'twas uncommon polite in a person of your class. What class do you belong to? *She* b'longs to the graduating class. She's just got through at Bethle'um. She's going to teach *me* this summer."

"Is she?" said the other, smiling and becoming interested in his new acquaintance. "Well, I can't be quite so polite to you, you know, as you're not a lady. But I'll give you half of my seat." And he made room.

The boy shook his head a bit scornfully.

"No," said he. "I don't want to sit down. I've got a state-room."

"Is that so?"

"Yes. Me and Livy have one together. Livingston is his real name. Mamma says it is a very *aristocratic* name, but *I* think it is a very funny one, don't you? What's *your* name?"

"*N* or *M*," said the young man.

The boy looked puzzled. He evidently had not gone even so far in the Church Catechism.

"No — what *is* it?" he repeated coaxingly. "Tell me, honor bright."

"Well, Honor Bright," said the other, lightly.

The boy pouted, feeling that he was being teased.

"Why won't you tell me?" persisted he. "Are you ashamed of your name? I ain't ashamed of mine. It's Angus Murdoch. My grandfather was a Scotchman, and Murdoch is a swell name, too. Aunt Honor ain't ashamed of hers either. Though, wasn't she mad when Livy bawled it out so! She makes *him* step round like she does everybody else."

The young fellow was silent for a moment; and though master Angus went on talking of something else, he took no notice of him, apparently quite busy enough with his own thoughts.

"Is your aunt's name Honor Bright?" he asked at length, though it was hardly like a question.

"Honor Bright," echoed the boy. "Of course it is. Didn't you hear Livy call her?"

"It is queer," murmured the young fellow thoughtfully.

"That's what everybody says," responded Angus. "It wasn't her name always, — that is, the Honor part of it. She changed it a while ago. I didn't know girls ever changed their names except when they got married. Do they?"

"I never knew of a case."

"Aunt Honor ain't married, anyway," continued Angus positively. And then, dropping his voice, "Say, do you s'pose she'd marry Livy?"

"Really," was the amused response, "I am hardly in a position to give an opinion in the matter."

"He's a regular girl-boy, anyway," continued Angus. "Why, he worked my mother a sofa pillow last Christmas, and he can't ride a bicycle to save his neck. He's dead smashed on aunt Honor, anyway. You ought t'have seen him last winter when she was home. And he needn't tell *me* he just happened to meet us in New York. He came on from Random on purpose."

"Do you live at Random?" inquired his companion.

"Yes; and our place is called Hollownook. It's the big house all covered up with trees — on the right. No, it's on the left. Do you remember?"

"No, I never was in Random. You mean Random in Massachusetts, not far from Boston?"

"Yes. Do you live in Massachusetts?"

"Yes — that is, I did once. I haven't been there for two years and a half."

"Where have you been all that time?"

"Out West, most of it."

"What have you been doing?"

"Oh, all sorts of things. The last thing I did was to work on a cattle-ranch."

"That's what aunt Honor said," declared Angus.

"What!" exclaimed his companion.

"She said you were a farmer, she guessed, by the looks of your hands and—"

Here this highly interesting conversation was abruptly terminated by the speaking of master Angus' name somewhat sharply close behind them.

Raising his eyes the young fellow beheld "aunt Honor" herself, who seemed very angry and disturbed for some reason or other.

"Angus," she repeated, "your mother wants you."

"Oh, no, she don't," said Angus coolly. "She only wants to know where I am. Tell her I'm here — talking. Say, aunt Honor, he *is* a farmer."

"You do altogether too much talking," said aunt Honor, curtly. "Come!" and she put out her hand decidedly.

"All right," agreed Angus. And then, in a lower tone, to his new friend, "I have to mind *her*. She ain't so bad always, though. She's jolly when you're all alone with her."

After they had gone the young fellow sat for some

time, apparently thinking hard to himself upon some subject or other.

By and by he got up and stretched himself rather inelegantly, like a person about to retire. He had no state-room, and he had not cared to take his berth down-stairs. But he was used to shifting for himself, and did not anticipate any trouble in getting his night's rest. He went and got his bag (a huge black one not at all of the sort its owner would worry about) out from under a cabin chair where he had deposited it when he first came on board; and then, as he walked along, noticing a dark passage-way leading down between some state-rooms to other outside ones, he entered it, threw his bag down in the corner, and with his head upon it was, a few minutes later, fast asleep.

He was aroused before very long by somebody stepping upon his foot, and then a drawling voice saying:

"I beg your pardon. I really couldn't see. And besides, a fellow must tread somewhere, you know."

"He needn't tread everywhere," grumbled the sleeper, turning over. And then Mr. Livingston Mauran disappeared within his state-room.

When he came out in the morning, the passage-way was clear. The young man and his bag had gone off

to Boston hours before on the train "leaving immediately upon the arrival of the boat."

CHAPTER II.

THOMAS RUGGLES, FARMER.

The train that our hero had turned out very early to take got into Boston the next morning at seven o'clock. Whether that was its usual time of arriving, he did not know. He got off and walked up through the gates like one who does not quite know where he wants to go next. The sight of the dépôt restaurant, however, furnished him once more with an immediate object in life, and he went in and ordered breakfast.

When he came to pay for his beefsteak and pot of coffee, he found that it left him with barely half a dollar in his possession. He walked out of the restaurant jingling his change and reflecting upon this fact. It evidently did not seem a serious matter to him, however, for he bought a morning paper at the news-stand, and then, after a somewhat unsatisfactory

toilet in the wash-room, he yielded to the touching entreaties of the negro who was there so far as to submit his shoes to the manipulations of that artist, for which he paid ten cents more. He went out into the main room again feeling like a new man.

Half-way out of the dépôt, he suddenly halted and looked at his bag.

"Well, old friend," he said, "you and I must consent to be separated, for a few hours at least. I can't lug you all over town. It's against the law to carry one's own baggage in Boston."

So he went and left the bag in the check-room, and then, in the best of spirits, passed out into the street.

After going a few rods he turned to the left and entered the Public Garden.

"It's only eight o'clock yet," he said, still talking to himself—a habit one is apt to get into if one travels much alone and does not readily fall into conversation with strangers. "And Mr. Lambert never used to get to the office before ten. I have whole mines of time. I'll prospect round a bit."

He walked about the Garden awhile, enjoying the fresh June morning (there is *one* month in the year, at least, when the climate of Boston is the finest in the world), watching the swans in the pond and never

failing to observe closely the people whom he met. These were mostly of his own sex, young men and old, passing through the Garden on their way down town. Not a few of them were of his own age too, modish, self-possessed young fellows every one, with hair cut close and clothes and collars of a pattern absolutely perfect, representatives of a generation already of no little importance in this brisk American life of ours, and to whom its entire conduct must ere long be handed over. Our hero, glancing from these to himself, felt that he was "looking down" on himself at the moment in more senses than one.

"I declare!" said he, "I do look rather seedy. No wonder she took me for a farmer. However, that's easily remedied. I shall be as big a swell as any of 'em a week from now. Random? Let's see. That's about twenty miles out and five miles off the Boston and Albany road. It was funny about that girl's name though. We never had any relations Random that I know of. I'll ask old Lambert. He'll know. Meanwhile, I *must* go and get my hair cut. It looks like a Chinaman's, behind, I haven't a doubt."

He found a barber's shop where he got his hair cut for twenty-five cents. This disposed of a half-hour more, and the rest of the time until ten o'clock was spent in walking about on and near Washington

street. At just ten by the Old South he found himself near Court street; and, remembering well the way, he turned at once toward the law office of Lambert and Davison.

He went up the dark stairway and opened the door. There was no one in the outer office just then, and he stood waiting, hat in hand. How familiar the room looked with its tall stove that never was taken down even in summer, and its old desks, and its shelves of yellow books with their red labels! Nothing seemed to be changed. He looked about with a sort of breathless awe, almost ready to believe that the months that had gone by since he last came to this place were all a dream, and that now he had but to turn his head to see beside him a stern, palsied old man, his great-uncle, who, because their names were the same, had taken him to his house, and, in his own way, been very kind to him, and who had brought him here one day to hear a will read that left to him a large property. At that moment he seemed actually to hear once more the old man's feeble accents, and to see the look upon his face as he laid down his pen and looked up at his young heir. "It won't be long before it is yours, my boy. I wanted the money and the name to go together. All I ask of you is that you take good care of them both." Poor old uncle!

And only three weeks after that he had parted from him in anger and gone his own careless way, and never sent back any tidings of himself since. Ah ! if the old man were only there beside him now, how gladly would the boy have knelt at his feet and begged his forgiveness.

All at once, a man came out from the inner room, one comparatively young, and whom our hero did not remember ever to have seen.

“Is Mr. Lambert in ?” the lad inquired.

“Mr. Lambert is out of town. He is gone on a western trip, and may be away two months.”

The visitor’s face fell. “And Mr. Davison ?” he asked.

“I am Mr. Davison.”

The young fellow looked surprised. “But you are not the Mr. Davison who was here three years ago ?”

“Oh, no. That was my father. He is not living. I hold his place in the firm.”

The visitor looked puzzled and disappointed. He began to realize all at once that one does not go away for three years and come back to find things as he left them.

“Did you want to see Mr. Lambert especially ?” asked Mr. Davison, after a moment’s waiting.

“I don’t know. Perhaps you can tell me. I want

to know about Mr. Honor Bright, whose business your firm used to see to. He is not alive, I suppose?"

"Oh, no. He died more than two years ago."

The lad's face showed no particular emotion at this, and yet he was shocked. He had felt sure his uncle must be dead, but he had never positively known it until this moment.

"Can you tell me about his property — what became of it?"

"Oh, yes. We have the care of it still. Sit down." And the lawyer drew up some chairs. "It was left to a young lady, a Miss Bright, of Random, in this State. She comes into full possession next September, on her eighteenth birthday."

The visitor had turned to the table while this was being said, and was nervously thumbing some papers that were there. Here was news that he had *not* expected, and he did not like the lawyer to see how much he was startled by it.

"Were there — were there two wills?" he was presently able to inquire, though he did not look up.

"No; there was only a codicil to the first. There was a boy, named after Mr. Bright, a grand-nephew, who was to have had the property. But he ran away from home and went to sea, and the ship he sailed

in was lost off Cape Horn with all on board. Mr. Bright died before that, however; but after the boy went to sea, he added the codicil to the effect that if anything happened to his nephew, the property was to go to a grand-niece, this Miss Bright, on condition that she should change her first name to Honor. That name was always his hobby, and after the boy went off, it worried him to think that somebody with some other name might be his heir. So he made the condition. The girl would have been one heir, anyway; and she didn't mind the change of name. Of course as soon as it was certain that the *Syren* was lost, we became her guardians, and she has had what she wanted of the income of the property ever since. As I say, she will have it all next September."

The young fellow had been sitting there during this recital, rolling and unrolling his soft hat and looking down at the floor. It was all so strange and unexpected to him that he did not seem able quite to get it through his head.

"There was no doubt about — that the nephew was lost?" he asked at length.

"No," was the answer. "It was positively proved from the owner's books that he sailed in the ship *Syren* of New York, and she with all hands was lost. That was nearly three years ago, too. At any rate

the codicil distinctly says that if he doesn't appear before Miss Bright's eighteenth birthday, the property is to go to her finally and irrecoverably."

Just then a gentleman in great apparent haste entered the room, and Mr. Davison, excusing himself, went into the back office with this new-comer. Our hero got up and stood for a moment thinking over what he had heard. Presently he went over to where there hung upon the wall a map of "Boston and Vicinity" showing the whole country for twenty miles around. He studied it for some moments, taking out a pencil and making some notes from it. Finally he put on his hat and left the room.

He went slowly down-stairs with his hands in his pockets muttering to himself.

"So," said he, "it seems the *Syren* didn't go off without me after all, and it wasn't the *Romney* but *she* that I sailed in. And I was lost off the Horn. There is no doubt about that. It was *proved*. And a young lady with black eyes and a temper like a white squall has got my money and my name too. Well, then, who *am* I, anyway? And where do I belong? And where am I bound?"

On the landing below there was a man sweeping. He looked up at the lad coming down-stairs with a good-natured grin.

“Good mornin’, sorr,” said he, suspending operations for a moment to make passage way.

Our hero, looking up, returned the salutation and the smile involuntarily as he passed by. A few feet away he suddenly turned and went back.

“What is your name?” he asked the man.

“Thomas Ruggles, sorr,” said the sweeper, grinning again.

“Thomas Ruggles?” repeated his questioner. “It’s a very good name indeed—much better than none at all. Here”—he put his hand into his pocket. “There’s fourteen cents. It’s all I have in the world. I’ll give it to you if you’ll lend me your name for three months. What do you say?”

Mr. Ruggles looked first at our hero and then at the money. He failed quite to understand the one, but the other was perfectly comprehensible, and he put out his hand for it.

The young man dropped the coins into his open palm.

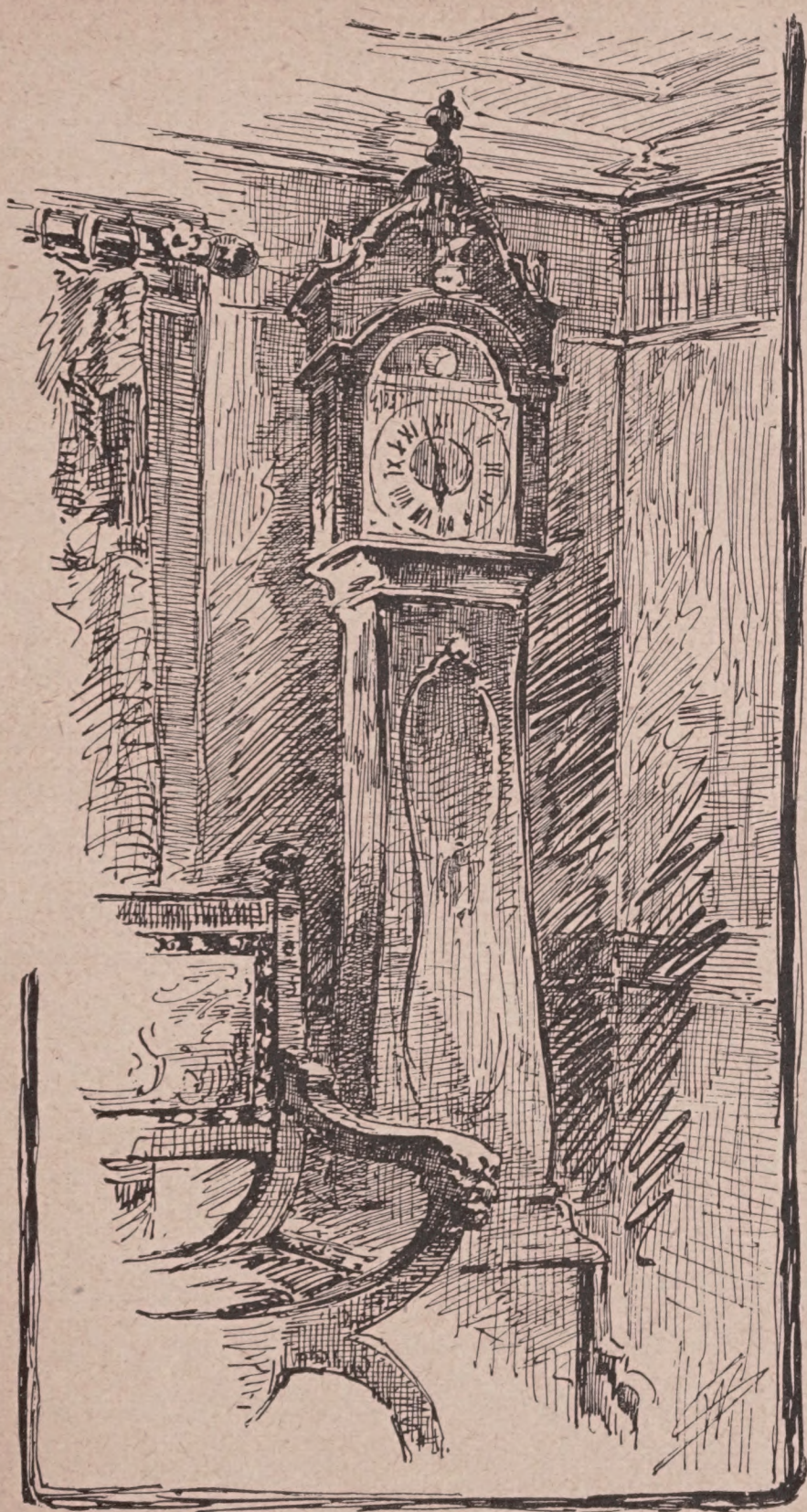
“And I’m much obliged into the bargain,” said he. “I’ll return the name at the end of the time as good as I took it. You may rely upon that.”

Then he turned and walked away, taking the direction of the Common again.

“Now, Thomas Ruggles, farmer,” he was saying

to himself, with a sudden return of spirits, "you have a name and occupation, and may still consider yourself respectable. You had best take yourself into the farming districts as fast as your legs will carry you. Let me see —"

And he took the piece of paper from his pocket and fell to studying it as he went along.



SIX O'CLOCK IN THE MORNING.



CHAPTER III.

THE BEGINNING OF THE LONGEST DAY IN THE YEAR.

THE morning after she got back to Hollownook, Honor Bright arose very early. They had come out from Boston quite late the day before, and she had chosen to stay indoors and keep quiet that night. It was one of Honor's notions — she was a person with a great many notions of her own — always to renew her acquaintance with home at early morning. She had been an early riser all her life, and the very pleasantest hours of that life, whenever she dreamily looked back upon it, seemed to her to have been the hours between sunrise and breakfast time.

For a long while the girl busied herself about her room, unpacking her trunk, arranging drawers and closets, looking over desks and boxes which had not been disturbed since she went away almost a year ago,

and whose contents were quite fresh and interesting to her now. And then, by and by, having carefully made her bed and put her room in order just as she had been required to do at school, she went to the window and stood with her arms upon the broad stone sill, looking out.

And one could hardly fancy a more pleasant picture than that upon which she looked, and of which, indeed, she herself formed a part. The sun was hardly up above the trees yet, and the lawn before the house, with its long shadows and its well-kept paths and shrubbery, was fresh and cool with morning dew. The house itself was far back from the road. It was an old stone house, older than the country's independence, and, if it had stood out barely by itself, would have appeared very old-fashioned and awkward with its low piazza and huge pillars along the front, and its narrow double windows like long slits in the walls; but there were so many grand old trees crowding all about it to drop their shifting shadows over it and hide it that its very homeliness became picturesque and attractive. Honor's room was in the second story, beyond the piazza and at the corner. An elm tree reached down one of its great arms directly over the front window where she was. The limb had grown since she had stood there

last, as though it had missed her and tried to look at the window to see if she were there. She drew down the limb and laid a handful of its leaves along her face to feel their refreshing coolness. Then, with sudden thought, she went and brought her bird-cage, and again pulling down the limb, fastened the cage to it with a bit of ribbon.

“There, *Joli!*” she said. “You shall come out here with the other birds and see if you can’t find your voice. You haven’t sung a note since I came home. What do you mean, sir? Aren’t you glad to see me?”

Whereupon the bird, awakened thus to a proper sense of its shortcomings, and catching the note of a robin chirping from a tree close by, suddenly opened its mouth and poured forth a flood of melody that was delicious, while the cage danced up and down suspended from the limb.

Honor listened for a moment, and then, in her turn, also took up the note in a strain that, so far as words were concerned, was quite as meaningless as the song of the robin or canary, but which, like theirs, was nevertheless expressive of abundant joy and freedom. Why should she not be as merry and joyful as the birds, she who was once more back among them at last with the same bright morning all about her and

the same wealth of beautiful summer days all before? There was perhaps at this moment no happier creature in all the world than Honor Bright; and she felt it fully.

Just then a child's voice called out to her from below. It was Angus, who had heard her singing and came around the corner of the house.

"Is that you, aunt Honor?" cried he. "I didn't know you were up."

"Good-morning, Angus," said Honor pointedly. Having decided to take charge of her nephew's education, she thought it well to begin at once upon his manners. "The first thing to do when you meet people in the morning is to bid them good-morning."

So Angus obediently said good-morning, taking off his hat into the bargain.

"Yes," Honor continued, "I've been up a long while. This is the twenty-first of June, the longest day in the year, and I don't want to waste a single minute of it. Lots of things might happen to me the longest day in the year, and I'm not going to miss any of them by lying in bed. Wait a moment and I'll come down. I want to go all about the place before breakfast."

An instant later Honor appeared at the front door, bareheaded and swinging her straw hat by the strings.

The morning was already growing warm, but she looked refreshingly cool and pretty in her white dress with a knot of red ribbon in her hair. Honor always had a bit of red about her somewhere, though never more than a bit. Red was her color.

"I tell you what, aunt Honor!" uttered Angus, gazing at her in genuine admiration, "you look as nice as — as strawberry ice-cream."

"Thank you," said Honor. "You will do, I guess. Come along."

They walked along together across the close-cut lawn, taking no pains at all to keep in the paths, for neither minded the dew. At the hedge, Honor stopped to shake hands with a grizzled old man in his shirt-sleeves who was trimming the evergreen with a pair of shears. This was Donald Campbell, the man-of-all-work at Hollownook, who had lived with Mr. Murdoch for years. He greeted the girl in a broad Scotch accent, and was evidently delighted to see her back. Then Angus drew her impatiently along, first to the stables to see the new horse, Black Douglas, that his father had bought a week before up in Vermont; then to the rabbit hutches which were Angus' especial care and property; and after that, down through the summer-house and back lawn to the "woods," an extensive array of pine trees that

stretched away behind the house towards Random Pond, a large piece of water half a mile distant. There was an abundance of pine forests all about Random, which, combined with the fact that the village was quite high above the sea's level, made the air thereabouts extremely bracing and healthy. Just back of the house there was a large hollow that, with its roof of green branches above and the ground beneath covered with a thick carpet of pine needles, formed a most delightful retreat during the leafy season. There was a hammock swung between two of the trees ; and there were rocks and rustic seats all around. Doubtless it was this hollow nook that had suggested a name for the estate itself. Hollownook had been purchased by Mr. Murdoch a dozen years before, shortly after his marriage to Miss Bright, Honor's sister. The gentleman was a merchant of Boston, but had found it impossible to endure the trying climate of that city, and had come to Random because of its exceptionally healthy air. He still kept his business in Boston, and went to town four or five days of every week. Honor had lived with the Murdochs ever since her sister's marriage, and was regarded by Mr. Murdoch almost as his own child.

Honor sat down in the hammock in half-conscious compliance with Angus' earnest request, and per-

mitted herself to be swung back and forth, she the while gazing with half-shut eyes up at the branches overhead, and thinking anew how delightful everything was about her, and how great reason she had to be thankful and happy. Her life had been full, so far back as she could remember, of good times; but she knew to-day that there were times to come that would be better still. Life was beginning to have meanings for her, and she had felt herself of late growing daily into new capability of enjoyment. Heretofore she had taken all pleasures as a matter of course, enjoying them, as birds and children do, without thinking anything about it. But now—and this was the thought that came to her as she lay there in the hammock this morning—now she was beginning to enjoy her very enjoyment itself. A new pleasure had suddenly been added to all the other pleasures of life, this pleasure of sitting or lying perfectly quiet and realizing fully how beautiful the whole world was, and how good a thing it was to be alive in it and to enjoy it.

Angus however was never contented with following one occupation or remaining in one place long. He presently gave the hammock-strings a jerk and aroused Honor from her reverie.

“I wish the breakfast-bell would ring,” said he.

"I'm hungry. Tell you what let's do. Let's go up through the strawberry patch and get some strawberries."

Honor readily assenting to this: they turned back again, going around by the strawberry beds, where they halted and began helping themselves to the fruit that already hung ripe from the vines in considerable quantities.

"What fine berries!" said Honor. "Do you know what kind they are?"

"No," answered Angus. "Old Dumbell will tell you, though. He's mighty proud of 'em, anyway."

"Old *who*?" demanded Honor.

"Old Campbell," repeated Angus. "I call him Old Dumbell. He would give me a good scolding if he caught me here. He told me to keep away from the berries."

"That's very disrespectful," said Honor severely.

"Yes," responded Angus innocently from down among the vines. "That's what I think. But Donald is very often disrespectful to me. I told the Governor so, but he only laughed."

"Told *who* so?" again cried Honor, too astonished to attend to her grammar. "Angus Murdoch, don't you ever let me hear you speak of your father in that way again!"

"Livy calls *his* father Governor," protested Angus.

"Livy ought to know better."

"Speak of angels and you'll hear their wings," said a new voice near by, and they looked up to see Livy himself daintily picking his way toward them between the wet plants. "I declare," he went on in his glib, drawling way, "my feet will be soaking wet. Miss Honor, how *do* you pass dry-shod among these vines? You must be under special protection, like the children of Israel."

"Livingston," began Honor at once, "do you call your father *Governor*?"

"Good-morning, Livy," interposed Angus. And then turning to Honor he observed with dignity, "Aunt Honor, the first thing to do when you meet people in the morning is to bid them good-morning."

Livingston laughed, comprehending; and Honor could not help smiling herself.

"I think we must all try and mend our manners," said she.

Livy carelessly assented, at the same time illustrating his own purpose of immediate reform by yawning and stretching himself. "I don't know what I am up so early for," said he. "I assure you it is not my habit."

"Don't apologize," replied Honor. "No doubt it is a first offence."

At that instant the breakfast-bell was heard.

"Ah," said Livy, "I remember now what it was I got up for—to come over and invite myself to breakfast. Shall we go in?" The Maurans were next-door neighbors, and Livy was always perfectly at home at Hollownook.

They started for the house, Angus running on in advance. At the stable door they found Mr. Murdoch just getting into the buggy. He explained that he had had to take his breakfast before the rest so as to catch an early train.

"Why don't you take Black Douglas?" asked Honor. "He can go three miles to Potiphar's one, I am sure." Potiphar was the family horse, kept more especially for the ladies to drive.

"Oh, but the Black is *your* horse," answered Mr. Murdoch. "I came across him the other day up in Brattleboro'; and as he seemed to be about what you said you wanted, I bought him. He is 'big, black, gentle, fast, spirited, and good for saddle as for carriage use.'" Honor clapped her hands in delight.

"Did you really get him for me?" she cried. "I was looking at him a little while ago, and he exactly suits me. He is just *perfect!*"

“No, he isn’t,” said Mr. Murdoch, “although I really think he would be but for one thing. I want you to try him before you accept him. He has one fault — I didn’t discover it myself until I got him home here — but if you can put up with that one, I’ll warrant him in every other respect.”

There was an odd look about Mr. Murdoch’s mouth as he said this, and Honor felt sure he was joking.

“I don’t believe it,” cried she. “I don’t believe he has a single fault.”

“Very well,” said Mr. Murdoch smiling. “You and Livy take him out after breakfast and try him. He is perfectly safe, I assure you. Any child — even Livy — can drive him.” And with a laugh at Livingston, Mr. Murdoch took the reins from Donald and drove off.

CHAPTER IV.

WHAT WAS THE FAULT WITH BLACK DOUGLAS.

AFTER breakfast Honor was eager to start off at once for a ride ; but Donald was not yet back from the station, and Livy positively refused to officiate as hostler.

“I’d do anything in the world for you except that, Miss Honor,” he said ; “I never *could* harness a horse right. And then it does scent one up so, and one’s hands get all covered with oil and black.” And the young man held up his white hands, and looked at them with an expression showing such extreme feeling on the subject, that Honor concluded to be amused rather than angry.

“Very well,” said she. “We’ll wait for Donald, then. But you shan’t *touch* the reins the whole time. You shall just sit on the seat beside me and look immaculate. I wonder if the horse really has any

fault. If it's anything serious, you won't be much good. That's certain!"

Donald Campbell had some errands to do down at the "stores," and did not get back until after ten. Honor, waiting idly upon the piazza with Livingston, called to him as he came up the drive, asking him to put Black Douglas into the phaeton as soon as he could. The man nodded like one consenting. Donald always consented rather than obeyed when directed to do anything — that is, when he did not squarely refuse or disobey. He was national and notional, having all the good and bad qualities of the Scotch peasant. He was faithful and true, but opinionated and independent. Ordinarily, too, he was a man of few words, and Master Angus' nick-name for him was not without significance.

Quite a while later Donald, with Angus on the seat beside him, drove around to the front door. Black Douglas, groomed now and in a bran-new harness, was indeed a sight to gladden the heart of his young mistress. His coat was black and shining as jet, and without a mark on it. He was large, strong, clean-limbed and graceful; and he held his head high of his own accord, as though he were proud of himself, while his face, especially of course the eyes, had an almost humanly intelligent expres-

sion. Honor was delighted with him, and declared she did not believe he had a single fault, and that she knew he would go like the wind.

"Oo, ay, me leddie," muttered Donald. "Ye needna hae a doot o' that. He'll gang like the wind, gien he tek's a notion. The wind bloweth whaur it leesteth, though."

"Come, Angus," said Honor. "Jump down, please."

"Ain't I going?" whined Angus.

"No, there isn't room for three. Livingston is going with me."

And, finally made to understand that he must remain behind, Angus with very ill grace alighted and stood sourly regarding them as they got in.

"I hope you'll get run away with," he observed frankly, as Honor took up the reins. "And if you do, Livy can't hold him. He couldn't hold a wheelbarrow."

"If you talk in that way, sir, I'll *never* take you with me," said Honor sternly.

"I don't care," was the reply. "And I'll set the house on fire while you are gone. See if I don't."

"Very well," said Honor. "You'll find some matches on the library shelf."

And then they drove away.

Random, it must be understood, was quite a village, and with a great many reasons for thinking well of itself even though the reader has never heard of it before. It was made up of what, as a whole, would be called a farming population, which was spread out over the hills and valleys for several miles around; but the village itself—the Centre, as we say in the country—consisted of a considerable number of houses of varied age and appearance, almost all of them neat and comfortable, and some of them extremely tasteful and sometimes even luxurious in their surroundings, scattered along at frequently enough recurring intervals on each side the shady village street. Indeed, Random was an ancient New England village with just enough of “modern improvements” to entitle it to the respect of the most citified. It was near enough to town for people to go in once in a while and post themselves as to “what was what,” and it was sufficiently removed from railroads and factories itself not to have ceased yet to be entirely fresh and charming. It had its full share of natural beauties, chief among them a large pond, and a picturesque range of hills which had been named as mountains. And there were a certain number of people of the outside world who, no less than the villagers themselves, thought Random the

most delightful place in the world, and came to dwell there every summer. All this that has been said of the village is not so much an attempt to describe it as to furnish a sketch which it may be left to the reader's imagination to fill out.

Honor Bright was known by everybody in Random — and thought a great deal of, too, for that matter — and as now they drove down the village street, she was bowing and smiling constantly to right and left, and talking to her companion all the while of this person or that whom they met, or asking questions suggested by the sight of them: Did Mr. Littlefield expect any boarders this summer? Had the Cutlers or the Wetherells come out yet? Were the Norcrosses back from Europe? Was that tall young man with Edith Browning the new high-school teacher? — and a hundred other similar questions. Random society was composed of very nice people indeed, especially during the summer months, and Honor was truly anticipating a glorious summer.

Black Douglas drove with a tight rein, which was just what Honor liked. If she wanted him to go faster she pulled up the reins and he quickened his pace, until presently he fairly flew along the hard, smooth road. And when she tired of that, she had but to speak to him to quiet him again. He



"BLACK DOUGLAS DROVE WITH A TIGHT REIN."

was a wonderful horse. What could Mr. Murdoch have meant by saying that he had a fault that would prevent their keeping him? It must have been one of her brother's jokes. Nothing in the world should induce her to part with Black Douglas. There was not a horse in America that could replace him.

They rode out into the open country, over toward Mizpah and around the north side of Random Pond. There were ever so many places about Random that were old friends of Honor's and associated in her mind with all sorts of pleasant memories. But she chose to ride past them all to-day and view them from a distance rather than to stop at any of them. She meant to visit each one of them later; but Livingston was not just the sort of person she cared to have with her at such times. There was a serious, dreamy sort of mood very common with Honor Bright, and when in such a mood she preferred her own society to almost anybody's. She had as yet found nobody that could exactly sympathize with her at such times.

It was nearly one o'clock when they turned back. The sun was hot, but a cool breeze was blowing, as there almost always is among the Random hills. They were over on the old Boston turnpike now and at least half a dozen miles from home. Black Doug-

las was in excellent condition, and seemed not to have turned a hair during the ride. Honor was again in extravagant terms expressing her appreciation of his perfections, when all at once the horse stopped short in the middle of the road.

"Well," said Honor, surprised, "what's the matter now? The harness must be broken somewhere, and he knows it. Please get out, Livingston, and see what it is."

So Livingston got out and examined the harness closely all around, the horse standing perfectly still.

"I don't see as anything is the matter," he at length said.

"Are you sure you would know if there was?" inquired Honor a little irritably. Perhaps she had some sort of presentiment of what was coming. "Well, get in again. Probably he stopped to breathe."

Livingston resumed his seat, and Honor drew up the reins again and bade the horse go on; but he did not move. Whereupon she spoke to him sharply and then touched him lightly with the whip, but he only shook his head and flitted his tail. Not a step would he stir. And all at once it became plain as day what was the "fault" with Black Douglas.

"By Jove!" ejaculated Livingston — it was the

only strong expression that the young gentleman ever indulged in, and the reader will, I am sure, permit him the use of it now and then in these chapters.

“By Jove! He’s *balky*!”

“Oh dear!” exclaimed Honor, realizing the dreadful truth at once, and almost ready to cry with vexation. She had been accustomed more or less to horses all her life, and understood perfectly well what a “balky” horse was. If *that* was Douglas’s fault then keeping him would indeed be out of the question, as her brother had said.

“Pshaw!” cried she. “It is no such thing. I won’t have it!” And she stamped her foot on the bottom of the carriage. “Here, you take the whip and lay it on him while I hold the reins. We’ll *see* if he won’t go.”

She wound the reins about her hands and drew them tight, bracing herself firmly in her place, while her companion, with no great force, struck the horse with the whip. The result did not encourage them to repeat the experiment however. Black Douglas never submitted to the lash. He gave a sort of plunge not so much forward as up in the air, and for a moment it seemed as though he would have fallen back upon the phaeton. Honor uttered a little cry,

and Livingston dropped his whip in alarm. The next moment, however, the horse was standing quiet and immovable as ever, coolly switching the flies with his tail. He had only wished to have the matter understood. He was candid and firm, as balky horses are apt to be. He had stopped there in the road because he chose to do so. When he went on again it would be for a precisely similar reason.

Honor pulled at intervals upon the reins, and coaxed and threatened with all her womanly might, and her companion added his pleading to hers, but Black Douglas was inflexible. The whip they dared not use again. Livingston alighted once more, and cautiously taking hold of the bridle, sought to lead and then to pull him along, but the horse only shook his head, at first gently as though laughing at the attempt, and then with such decided emphasis that Livingston was quite willing to relinquish his hold.

"It's of no use," drawled the youth despairingly. "I can't start him."

"Very well," said Honor, laying down the reins and settling back resignedly in her seat. "Then I suppose we'll have to wait."

"But it's after one o'clock," — looking at his watch. "We ought to be getting home. And what if he should *never* start?"

Honor could not help laughing at his dismay. The next moment, however, there were actual tears in her eyes.

"It is too bad!" she cried. "Such a splendid horse, and—he balks!"

"It's a great misfortune," observed Livingston by way of sympathy.

"It's not a misfortune. It's a calamity." Honor had indeed set her heart upon keeping Black Douglas.

"We might build a fire under him," suggested Livingston in all seriousness. He had heard that that would start a balky horse.

Honor shook her head. "It wouldn't start *him*," said she. "Or if it did, he would never stop again at all." She was rather proud of the horse's very obstinacy. It was no second-rate obstinacy at any rate.

"Or if we had a lump of sugar to give him," continued Livingston. "They say that will start them."

But at the word sugar Black Douglas himself, as though he understood it, threw up his head again with an air of the profoundest contempt, as much as to say, "What do you take me for?"

"Oh dear!" uttered Honor again. It was a cry of real distress. "Livingston Mauraan! Why *don't* you make him go?"

Poor Livingston's attitude and expression sufficiently expressed his utter helplessness in the case without any verbal reply.

"If I only were a man!" cried Miss Bright with contemptuous vehemence. And then suddenly, with an entire change of voice and manner, "Sir, would you be so kind—can't you make my horse go?"

The last half of her sentence had been addressed to a third person who had come up behind on foot, and who now stopped, then half turned and walked toward them. He was a person of about Livingston's age, of dusty and disreputable appearance, apparently of the genus tramp. He had on an old straw hat with a torn rim, which, if truth be told, he had taken from the head of a scare-crow a few miles back. It was no robbery, though; he had left his own in exchange.

"Our horse has balked," explained Livingston, thinking it best that he, as the gentleman of the party, should conduct whatever conversation it was necessary to hold with this stranger.

The latter scarcely looked at either Livingston or Honor. He walked straight up to Black Douglas.

"He's a splendid horse," said he admiringly. "It's a pity he's balky."

Then, half-pushing Livingston aside, he went to

the animal's head. "Let me see," he continued: "Horses always know me." He took the velvet muzzle in both his hands and drew it close to his own face, seeming to talk to the horse all the while in low, caressing tones. Honor viewed his movements almost with indignation. It seemed to her that this "person" was going altogether too far, putting his face thus familiarly side by side with that of her thoroughbred horse.

There was nothing wonderful either, so far, in the stranger's treatment of the case; and Livingston, not believing that he could do anything for them, was about to tell him loftily that he might just as well move on again, when the latter let go the horse's head and stepped to one side, at which, strange to say, Black Douglas, with a low whinny, at once started forward after him. The "tramp" caressed him for a moment longer, and then, with his hand still on the horse's nose, walked slowly forward, the animal following him straight along without hesitation.

"There," said the stranger, halting again. "Perhaps he will go now. You get in" — to Livingston — "and I'll lead him on a bit."

Livingston took his place again, while Honor, who had been searching in her purse, held out a coin.

"Here," said she to the tramp. "And thank you very much. I am sure he will go all right now."

The individual thus honored bowed, lifting his hat and showing a well-shaped head, close-cut as Livingston's own.

"I'll take the thanks," said he oddly. "The money you can give to the other fellow. He did the best he could." And he nodded toward the somewhat astonished Livingston. Then he turned his back upon them decidedly, and began leading Black Douglas along the road.

The horse advanced with perfect readiness so long as the stranger kept before; but the instant the latter halted or drew back, Douglas stopped too, whinnying discontentedly and looking around at his new friend. And not a single step would he go without him. Again and again the experiment was tried, but with the same result.

"It's no use," said the tramp at last, turning back to the phaeton with a low laugh. "He won't go on without me. I don't see but you'll have to take me in to drive you." This last as if he were proposing the most ordinary thing in the world.

"By Jove!" remarked Livingston in an undertone. "There's assurance for you!" And then, aloud, he added, "I say, my friend. What'll you ask to lead

him back to Random? It's only five miles and a half."

"Well," responded the other coolly, "I'll do it for five million dollars in gold, cash down. Or—I'll do it for nothing if you'll get out and walk back with me to keep me company."

Honor bit her lip in silent indignation.

"Don't make any more words with him about it, Livingston," said she. "Here, *I'll* get out and walk and he can get in."

"Oh, no; don't do that!" said the traveller quickly, as she rose to step down from the phaeton. "I'll lead him, then, and trust you for the five million."

So he took hold of the bit again and they started on. But it seemed so hot and dusty for him, tired as he already must be, and it was such slow work, after all, walking the horse, that the young lady presently relented and of her own accord asked him to get in.

He accepted the invitation without comment, taking his place on the edge of the seat outside of Livingston, and letting his feet hang over the wheel. As for Black Douglas, he merely looked around to be quite sure that his new friend was not deserting him, and then started off for home with a brisk trot; and presently the tramp handed over the reins to the young lady, remarking that he did not think there would be any more trouble.

Honor took the reins without a word, and she scarcely spoke all the rest of the way back. She had found something to think about, however; for it had come to her all at once since they had started that she had seen this odd person before, two nights ago upon the Sound steamer. And in thinking over again his behavior on that occasion, and putting it beside what he had done to-day, she began to feel for him, in spite of his unprepossessing appearance, a considerable accession of interest and respect. She looked at him stealthily once or twice as they rode along.

“If he were only washed up and had a decent suit of clothes on — say a suit of livery —” she thought to herself.

And then she fixed her eyes on Black Douglas again and kept them there for a long while, turning over in her mind a plan that she had all at once conceived. And by the time they got to Random post-office she was talking away again to Livingston in the best of spirits. The fact was, she thought she saw her way clear to keeping Black Douglas after all.

And Miss Bright did not stop at the gate when they got to Hollownook, to drop the tramp whom she had brought home with her, but drove straight in and around back of the house.

"If you'll wait a little while," she said to the stranger, "you shall have something to eat."

At which the latter nodded in a matter-of-fact way and strolled off toward the stable. Perhaps he had expected something of the sort, himself. At least he evidently had no objection to "waiting a little while." Probably his time was not especially valuable.

Meanwhile Honor had gone into the kitchen and told Elspeth McKay, the Scotch housekeeper, that she wanted that tramp fed and cared for.

"And if possible," said she, "give him some sort of a job so as to keep him about here until night. I want Mr. Murdoch to see him."

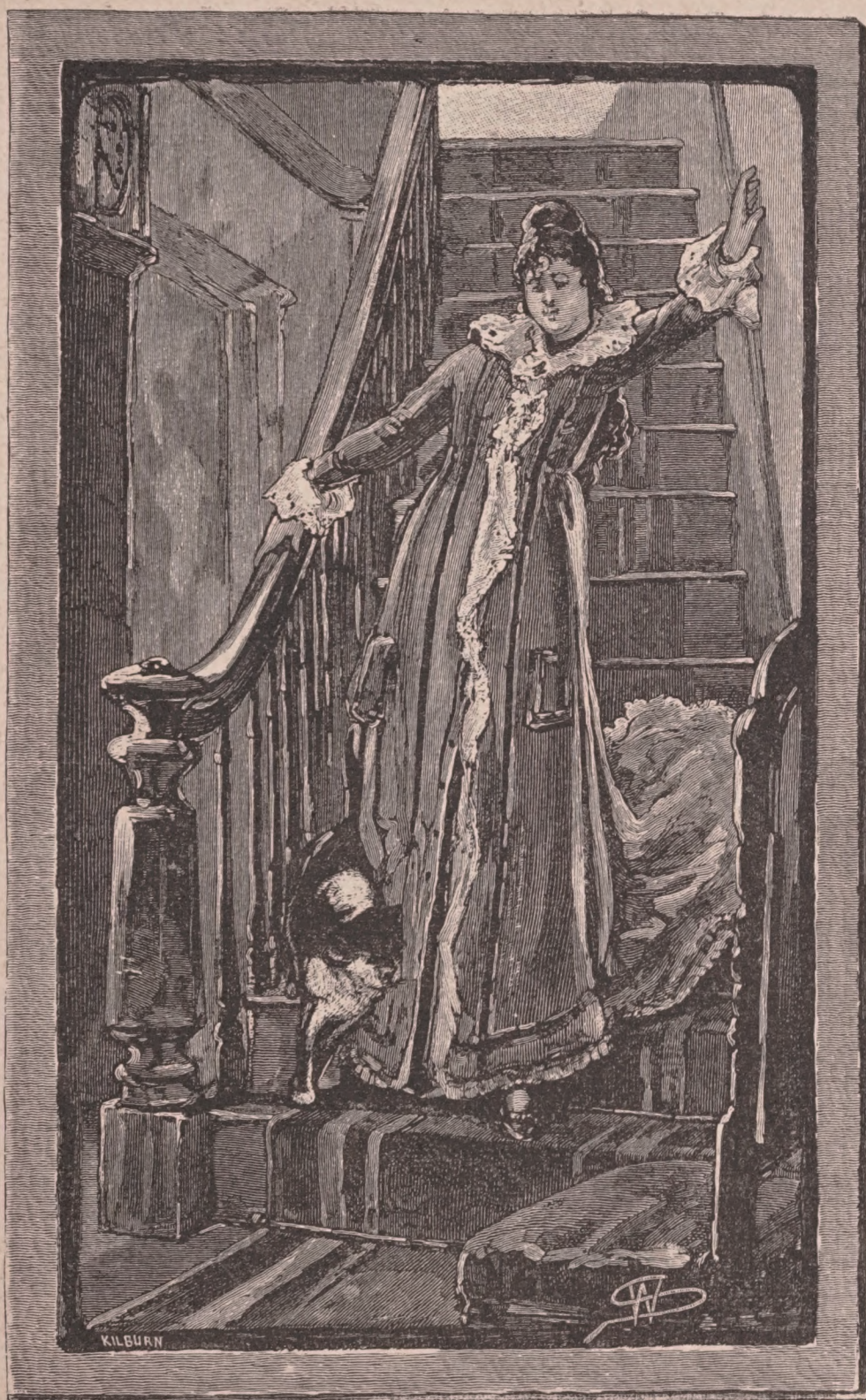
CHAPTER V.

RUGGLES GETS A PLACE.

THE "longest day in the year" was far gone into its afternoon now. The clock in the hall struck the half-hour after four as Honor came downstairs fresh from a long nap. I have often noticed that people who get up very early in the morning are given to long naps in the afternoon. She stepped out upon the piazza and stood there. There was a cool breeze in the tree-tops, and the shadows of the elms were growing long again upon the grass.

At that moment Angus came rushing through the hall like a gale of wind, in at the back door and out at the front. He had caught sight of Honor's dress on the piazza.

"Aunt Honor, aunt Honor," he cried, seizing hold of her. "Have you got an old hoop-skirt? He wants a piece of the steel. He is making me an officer-kite."



FRESH FROM A LONG NAP.

Honor laughed. "Who is '*he*'?" asked she.

"Oh, Ruggles. He told me what his name was this time. Say, have you got a piece?"

"I don't know, I'm sure. I'll go and see."

So they went up-stairs together; and though Honor was unable to produce the desired skirt-wire, Angus' mother found a piece for him, and he hurried off again to ask Ruggles if it would do.

Honor followed slowly with intentions of her own. She comprehended that "Ruggles" was the person who had driven her home, and whom she had asked Elspeth to keep about the place until night. She went out the front door, and wandering carelessly around the house, came upon the two, Angus and the stranger, busy with their kite out by the side-door. The latter was washed and brushed up a bit, and already appeared rather more respectable.

Ruggles was down on his knees on the concrete walk, so busy with his work that he did not see the new-comer at all. The kite that he was making seemed to be of the ordinary pattern, save that its backbone ran up some ten or twelve inches above the bow, and had a short cross-piece upon it near this upper end. Honor had been a manufacturer of kites herself in her day, and noticed this peculiarity at once. She hardly understood the reason of it, how-

ever, even when the kite-maker took a piece of hoop-skirt wire which he now held in his hand divested of its covering, and running it through a place in the backbone close to the bow, brought the ends around, passing them again through the cross-piece, near the ends thereof, so as to leave a framed half-circle below it, then bringing the ends of the wire together to a point at the extreme end of the backbone. This completed, he held up his work and looked at it, a kite-frame like any other, save that above the bow there was an additional frame some six inches wide and twelve high, of the shape of a half-circle and a half-diamond put together.

“What is that for, pray?” inquired Honor, seizing the first favorable opportunity to make herself known. There was no reason, of course, why she should not address this person if it pleased her, this farmer, traveller, tramp, or whatever he was. Indeed, to have hesitated to do so would have been to assume that he was of some importance.

The young fellow looked up quickly, but exhibited neither surprise nor confusion.

“That’s a frame for a kite,” he said simply.

“Oh, the upper part?”

“It’s an officer-kite, and that is the head and cap. When I get the paper on and get it painted, then you

will see. I don't know where I'll get the paint, though." He took off his hat and looked thoughtfully around. "Is there any colored paint about the place, young fellow?" This last to Angus, who was squatted down near by, watching proceedings.

"I have plenty of paints," said Honor. "Do you want oils or water-colors?"

"Oh, water-colors will do, I guess. We shan't want to fly the kite in a storm. Besides, the oil would spread."

"Is this your own idea?" asked Honor — "this officer-kite?"

"No. That is, the extra part of the frame is. The idea of painting the kite like an officer I got out of a book I used to have. I thought it would look better with the head above the bow. And I can sling it so it will fly just as well."

"You are very ingenious," remarked Honor, patronizingly. "I should never have thought of utilizing a skirt-wire in that way. Gail Hamilton says 'a hoop-skirt is the one thing on earth for which there is no secondary use.'"

"Pooh!" observed the young man, freely. "If you'll bring him to me, I'll show him a dozen secondary uses to put it to." He evidently took the person named to be a man, perhaps some personal friend of

Honor's. "Why," he added, a second later, "a Ute Indian would know better than that. I saw one once, out in Denver, wearing a hoop-skirt around for a bonnet. He looked funny enough, I tell you." And the speaker laughed at the recollection. "I don't know where he could have gotten it," he continued. "Bought it at some dry-goods store, I suppose. They are great for finery, those Indians."

Honor listened with increasing interest. This fellow might be a tramp and very far beneath her in every respect; but she acknowledged to herself that he talked well, and that neither his face nor his manners were ordinary.

"Angus tells me your name is Ruggles," she went on in a tone half-inquiring.

The other held up his kite-frame, shifting the piece of wire a little to suit his eye.

"Yes," he answered, at length, "Thomas Ruggles."

"And you've been in Colorado? Was it there that you learned to manage horses?"

"Well, I had a good deal to do with 'em out there, first and last. But I always could manage 'em pretty well. It was born in me. For that matter I'm not sure but that it's born in every decent man, if he only knew it."

“What do you mean by that?” questioned the girl.

“Well, I don’t know.” Ruggles spoke slowly, as though he had never tried to put his idea into words before. “I fancy that every man that *is* a man has something in him that might make him master of any lower animal. It’s a part of his very manhood, you know. When God had made all the other animals, then he made man in his own image, and to him he gave dominion ‘*over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.*’” Ruggles repeated the words very reverently, as one who believes all words of Scripture to be God’s words. “While Adam was a good man, before he fell, he did have dominion over every living thing. He went about among them as he pleased, and not one of them dared to touch him. Indeed, I don’t believe they wanted to. They were all gentle enough then. It was only after man sinned and lost the mastery of himself, and got ashamed of himself, that he lost the mastery over the animals, and began to get afraid of them and treat them mean and make them wild.”

Ruggles had gone on with his thoughts until he had grown quite earnest and eloquent; but looking up now and catching Honor’s eye, he suddenly stopped. As for the latter, she was listening with

wonder and complete attention. She had ideas of her own as to the first chapter of Genesis, and it sounded to her almost strange to hear this lad talking about it in this way.

"Why," said she, "I don't believe that is to be taken literally — about the creation and all that. Do you really believe there was a Garden, and that Adam was put in it, and that he named all the animals?"

Ruggles looked at her wonderingly in turn. "Believe it!" repeated he, forgetting his embarrassment again in the intensity of his conviction. "Of course I do! *Don't you?* Why, it would be pure nonsense if it were not exactly true, every word. And as for man's having once had full power over all the animals, I *know* that. Why, he hasn't entirely lost it *now*. Don't we read sometimes of men looking dogs and lions in the eye and quelling 'em? Don't men charm snakes? All that, I tell you, is a *remnant* — a *hint* — of this power that God gave man in the first place. It's the natural relation of man and beast to be friendly, and for the man to be master. And if any man could be *perfect*, as Adam was before the Fall, then I believe he could do what he pleased with the animals, even now. Did the lions dare touch Daniel, and didn't the ravens come and feed Elijah, and don't we read that our Lord was with the wild beasts in the

wilderness? And I believe now that if a man who is perfectly fearless and manly will walk up to a noble horse and show him that he respects himself and the horse too — I believe that they can be friends in five minutes.”

Ruggles was red-hot with his subject again; but at this point he paused once more, realizing all at once that he might seem to have at the last been thinking of himself.

Honor had been listening breathlessly, quite carried away by the force of his manner and language.

“Ah!” said she, “just as *you* did this morning with Black Douglas.”

“Yes,” responded Ruggles with some confusion. “Just as I did this morning with Black Douglas. He *is* a noble horse.”

“And you are a ‘perfectly fearless and manly man’?” Honor was smiling, but not in derision.

“Well, I certainly wasn’t afraid. And I respected myself and the horse too, and I let him see it. I confess, though, it isn’t everybody that can come to an understanding with a horse in that way, at least not so soon. I think there is some natural knack about it, too. I always could make friends with horses. Why, down in New Mexico, one time, a

man I worked for had a horse that not one of his *vaqueros* dared mount — and they're no fools of riders, those Mexicans, you may be sure. They used to say they couldn't get near enough to him even to lasso him; but I don't know about that. They didn't want to, very bad. But I was out one day when the herd came by, and I stood there on a knoll all alone, and that horse left the rest and came and danced about me for fifteen minutes or so, and then actually trotted close up to me and put his nose on my shoulder. He *knew* that I wouldn't have abused his confidence for a fifty-pound nugget. It was nothing, only that he knew a friend when he saw him. And that was the way with your Black to-day. If I had a week with that horse, I could call him to me if there were a prairie on fire between us. It's too bad he balks. And I doubt if he can be cured."

"Could *you* cure him if you had him for a while?" asked Honor eagerly.

"I don't know. I'm afraid not — that is, not so he would never balk at all. It's *in* him. But he never would balk with *me*."

"Well, then," went on Honor with desperate abruptness, "why won't you stay here and drive him for me? I've set my heart on keeping him. And of course I could never go anywhere with him if he is

liable to balk. Will you? It shall be made satisfactory in every way, and you shall have nothing else whatever to do! Oh, please do!"

And here was this haughty and aristocratic young lady holding up her clasped hands to this unknown adventurer, and looking into his face in the most beseeching way possible.

Ruggles seemed to deliberate for a moment, Honor watching him very anxiously. She really would have been vexed and disappointed beyond measure if he had refused.

"I don't know," said the youth at last. "Who owns this place?"

"Mr. Murdoch, my sister's husband. But that doesn't make any difference."

"Is he here now?"

"He will be very soon. He comes home at half-past five."

"I should think he was the person to hire coachmen."

"No," said Honor. "I hire my own coachman. He only endorses whatever I do. Is that the only thing in the way of your staying?"

"Yes," said Ruggles. "If he is willing to have me come, why, I'll come, and glad of the chance."

"Well, then!" And Miss Honor clapped her

hands gleefully and ran off, pleased as a child, to meet her brother, who at that moment drove in at the great gate.

The matter of the new coachman was not mentioned, however, until after dinner. Then Mr. Murdoch, duly instructed by Honor, and not a little interested in the scheme himself, went around and held quite a long interview with Ruggles, the result of which was that the lad was engaged, at a certain reasonable rate per month, to take entire charge of the horses at Hollownook, and, indeed, to serve as the family coachman. Ruggles himself had preferred this arrangement. He had inspected the stables, understood just what work there would be to do, and considered himself perfectly competent to do it. If he was going to draw any pay, he said, he wanted to feel as though he was doing something to earn it. And Mr. Murdoch, who had long felt that he ought to have another hand about the place, and that perhaps it would be as well to relieve Donald from the care of the stable altogether, was quite satisfied to have the matter so. Honor, when informed of the arrangement, made some objection. She declared that she had discovered Ruggles, and that she wanted him as her own individual coachman. But she was promised that the young man should be always at

her disposal when she wanted him; and the matter rested there.

The girl sat down at her window to think about it again after she had gone up-stairs. How jolly it was that Black Douglas could be kept, after all! And there would be no more trouble about his balking! Ruggles would take care of that. And how nice the young man would look in a suit of livery, sitting up on a high seat behind her! For Honor meant to put her coachman into livery, by all means, and she should go into town at once to pick out a new phaeton—one with a high seat for Ruggles behind. Honor was very fond of “style,” in her way. Indeed, it came natural to her. The Brights had been quite accustomed to it, years ago, in the South, before the war. She had not said anything about the livery that night. She had been half afraid that Mr. Murdoch would laugh at the idea. But she meant to carry it out nevertheless. As for Ruggles, nothing probably would suit him better. He would be as proud as she of his high hat with a rosette, and a long drab coat and brass buttons. Indeed, there would be no such turnout as hers this side Boston!

And then, thinking still of some things this newcomer at Hollownook had said and done that day, she went and lit her lamp; and then, taking her

Bible, she sat down again, and, opening the book at its very beginning, read the first chapter of Genesis carefully through. And all the while, strange to say, it seemed to her that she was not so much reading as being read to. Verse after verse of that ancient story she seemed to hear the strong, earnest tones that she had listened to that afternoon repeating in her ear; and when she had finished the chapter she realized that it was full of meaning that she had never guessed at before.

REVEALING THE FIRST CHAPTER OF GENESIS.



CHAPTER VI.

IN WHICH THE STORY DOES NOT GET ON.

RUGGLES had been turned over to Elspeth to be taken care of for the night, and that worthy person was not a little puzzled as to what she would do with him. There were plenty of spare beds in the house ; but she had no intention of putting a newly hired coachman into any of them. She declared at length that Donald Campbell must give up half his bed, but the old Scotchman vetoed the proposition with a decided growl. Donald was far from pleased with the idea of having a new hand about the place. Ruggles himself finally settled the difficulty by taking a horse-blanket and going off down to the Hollow. Sleeping in a hammock under the trees on a summer night was anything but a hardship to him.

The next day, however, a room up-stairs in the stable was cleared and fitted up for his use. The

stable was modern-built, and the room both pleasant and comfortable. And after it had been cleaned and furnished, Honor herself came out with some curtains and pictures and some books for the table, that altogether made the place very inviting. Ruggles seemed greatly pleased with it all. And indeed he well might be. Most of his nights for the last three years had been spent amid far less luxurious surroundings.

There was no puzzle about Ruggles in the minds of anybody from the very first — no suspicion that he was anything different from that which he appeared. Indeed, for that matter, he was not. His name was the only assumed thing about him, after all, and he believed that he had come honestly enough by that. As for the facts of his earlier years, he simply kept quiet about them, as he had a perfect right to do. And his life in the West had given him a roughness and plainness that was quite in keeping with his present position. He might have a history — any tramp might; but, at least at this time, nobody at Hollownook troubled themselves at all about it, or thought of separating him in their minds from the circumstances under which he had presented himself. He was bright, respectful (though now and then rather familiar), and apparently quite honest. That was enough for Mr. Murdoch, a shrewd business man who

HOW RUGGLES SETTLED THE QUESTION.



knew the world. And if the fellow could manage Black Douglas, and Honor wanted him for a "tiger," why, Honor should have him. Honor always had what she wanted, anyway. Why shouldn't she, with two hundred and fifty thousand dollars of her own?

And indeed the words "bright, respectful and honest" went a good way toward describing Thomas Ruggles. Bright he certainly was. A duller boy than he ever had been must have learned, in all the knocking about that he had received, to keep his eyes and ears open, and to comprehend tolerably well and quickly whatever people or things he came into relation with. But rich as he was in experience, and self-reliant as it had made him, he had never lost a certain modesty as to his own merits and opinions which had been born in him, and which prompted him always to treat others, especially his elders, with respect. And for his honesty, I do not hesitate to say that he was honest as the day. He had a frank, open way with him that was unmistakable. I know that he was in a sense in a false position. If you should put it as harshly as you could, you might say, certainly, that he was imposing upon these people at Hollownook, passing himself off for what he was not, and concealing his real name and position. Yet it never entered the head of the lad himself to look at the

affair in any such way as that. Coming back to New England, he found himself, all at once, quite forgotten, his inheritance and his very name in possession of another. He was friendless and homeless, and the only man connected with the matter to whom he was known, the old lawyer, was thousands of miles away. Is it any wonder, as he stood looking down at himself with his hands in his empty pockets, that he felt like a tramp, and, in fact, became one? Besides, Ruggles had hired his new name and given every cent he had in the world in payment. Had not Honor Bright herself changed her name, and, so far from paying for the new one, received money for the change instead? At any rate, the hero of this story felt himself honest as the day. He naturally hated a lie. And I promise here that the one he told when he gave his name as Thomas Ruggles is the last one that shall pass his lips throughout the narrative.

It seems to me also that a word or two had best be said, before the story goes any further, of its heroine as well as its hero. In spite of myself, I feel about her a good deal as one who has introduced a friend whom he admires and likes, himself, and knows others will admire and like by and by, but is a little anxious as to the impression she will make at first, and so is tempted to explain or apologize for some things that

might to a stranger seem odd or inconsistent. The girl was not perfect; and, though we may not have seen very much of it as yet, as the story continues we shall find her at times doing and saying some questionable things. She was hot-tempered and hasty, and she could be, on occasion, unjust, unreasonable, disagreeable, and even rude. But in saying so much, I have tried to say the very worst of her. Her bitterest enemies at school (she had such, be sure) had acknowledged of her more than once that there was nothing small or mean about her; and her friends (their name was legion) never lost an opportunity of declaring that at heart she was good as gold and true as steel. And I, who have tried to say the worst of her, may try and tell the best of her, too. Her worst moments were the moments when she forgot *herself*: and that self was really generous and kind and good. She might be foolish and unfair and wrong often, but always there was her real self to appeal to; and once she realized her fault, she did her best at once and fully to repair it. So much for the character of Honor Bright. It was not a consistent one, I grant, and my description of it may have its contradictions; but I must ask the reader to take it as it is, and form the best idea of her that he can. Perhaps it will seem a clearer one later on.

It was on the afternoon of this second day, while she was still overseeing the arrangement of the room over the stable, that Honor mentioned to Ruggles the subject of the livery.

"By the way, Ruggles," she said, just as she was turning to go back to the house for something, "I shall want you to wear a livery. I suppose you will have to go into town to get measured."

She waited a full half-minute for an answer; and when it came it was not at all what she expected.

"I'm very sorry, Miss Bright," Ruggles said slowly; "but if you don't mind, I'd rather not do that."

"What? Go into town?"

"No: wear a livery."

"But I do mind," said Honor.

Ruggles shook his head. "I'd rather not," repeated he. "Why, the boys would all hoot at me and call me 'Buttons,' like they did old—" He stopped himself here, but he still shook his head. "No, Miss Bright, I can't do it."

"Pooh!" cried Honor with fine scorn. "You certainly aren't afraid of the boys!"

"No, I don't know as I am. It would be mighty inconvenient, though, getting down every two minutes to break their necks. But I don't like the idea itself. I never should feel right in a suit of livery—indeed

I shouldn't. I hope you won't ask it, Miss Bright."

Honor was very angry at this, as it seemed to her unreasonable obstinacy, and sharper words still were on her lips to say. But both pride and prudence came to her aid, and she turned and marched downstairs without another word. She would not stand thus and argue with a servant, she said to herself. And she knew too that Ruggles meant what he said, and she preferred giving up her livery to losing her coachman. So the matter was dropped once for all.

She treated Ruggles rather coolly for a day or two after this, but he did not seem to notice it, and gradually her feeling on the subject wore away. And the following Monday, when she went into town with Mr. Murdoch to look up a new phaeton, Ruggles was taken along for the sake of his judgment, which already was held in high esteem. And at the same time, the young man went around to a tailor's and ordered a suit of blue flannel, which, when, a few days after, he first appeared in it, looked so neat and nice that Honor confessed to herself she was rather glad, after all, he had objected to the livery.

CHAPTER VII.

ON MIZPAH.

HONOR had changed her mind after all as to what sort of a carriage she would have. Mr. Murdoch had laughed at her all the way into town about the "dicky;" and when, after visiting half a dozen different carriage-shops, it appeared that exactly such a vehicle as she had in mind probably did not exist and would have to be built for her, she was rather glad to make the fact an excuse for giving up her idea, and directing to be sent out a stylish two-seat basket-phaeton with which she had been taken from the first. She was not without a feeling herself that it would look quite as well for Ruggles to sit on the front seat and do the driving. Ruggles, too, was not a little relieved. He had not at all relished the idea of being perched up there behind, with his arms folded and a helpless air.

The phaeton had been sent out at once, and Honor found that she enjoyed her new turnout immensely. Just at this time Random life was extremely quiet, and her daily ride off over the high, far-looking hills or along the shady forest roads seemed almost a necessity to her. On such occasions, besides Ruggles, she sometimes took Livingston, and sometimes Mrs. Murdoch. But oftener she contented herself with the society of Angus, who answered very well the purpose of a companion, and yet did not interfere ever with any indulgence of her own peculiar mood or whim. Ruggles himself she did not, of course, regard as a companion. He was her driver, a part of the "turn-out," precisely as was the horse, or phaeton, or the long whip with its bit of scarlet ribbon attached. Nevertheless, she often talked with him as they rode along, and found him, with his original, earnest way of looking at things and his fund of practical knowledge, extremely entertaining. He was respectful and modest, rarely speaking now unless spoken to, and not talking unless encouraged to do so.

So the perfect June days drew to a close. It was on the morning of the very last of them that Honor, with Angus for her escort, started off upon what she meant to be a long drive.

"You need not worry if we do not get back until

dinner," she said to Mrs. Murdoch. "Indeed, I think we will come home by the station and bring Mr. Murdoch — so Donald need not go over. No, we won't take any lunch. If we want any we will pick it up somewhere."

And at the gate, when Ruggles looked around to know which way he should turn, she hesitated a moment and then said :

"Toward Mizpah, I think. It is just the day for the view." And then she motioned him to stop a moment, at the same time bidding Angus run back for the field-glasses.

Mizpah was a lofty hill, almost deserving the name of mountain, situated some eight miles west of Random Centre. On a clear day the surrounding country could be seen from its summit for many miles. It had always been a favorite spot with Honor; but she had not been over since her return from school. She had been "saving it" until exactly the right day should come and she should feel just like it.

They had plenty of time before them, and drove slowly. Honor was not in a talkative mood, and sat on the back seat in silence, enjoying the ride and the beauty of the morning. And Ruggles, too, did not seem disposed to say much, though Angus, who was on the seat with him, kept up a constant stream of

questions and remarks. The latter young gentleman seemed quite capable of doing the talking for all three of them. Honor at last interrupted him a little impatiently.

“Angus,” said she, “you must not talk so much. It’s not proper for children. Why, I do believe, if you had been Friday, you would have driven poor Robinson Crusoe crazy with questions before you had been on the island half an hour.”

Angus seemed greatly struck by this observation, and sat considering it thoughtfully for several minutes. In the mean time Honor herself, having once spoken, seemed inclined to talk. She began by inquiring about Black Douglass — whose back, when he first came to Hollownook, had been found to be badly chafed; and then she proceeded to discuss at some length the subject of horses and horseback riding. As soon as Douglass could bear a saddle, she should want to begin at once the latter exercise; and she should expect Ruggles to attend and give her lessons.

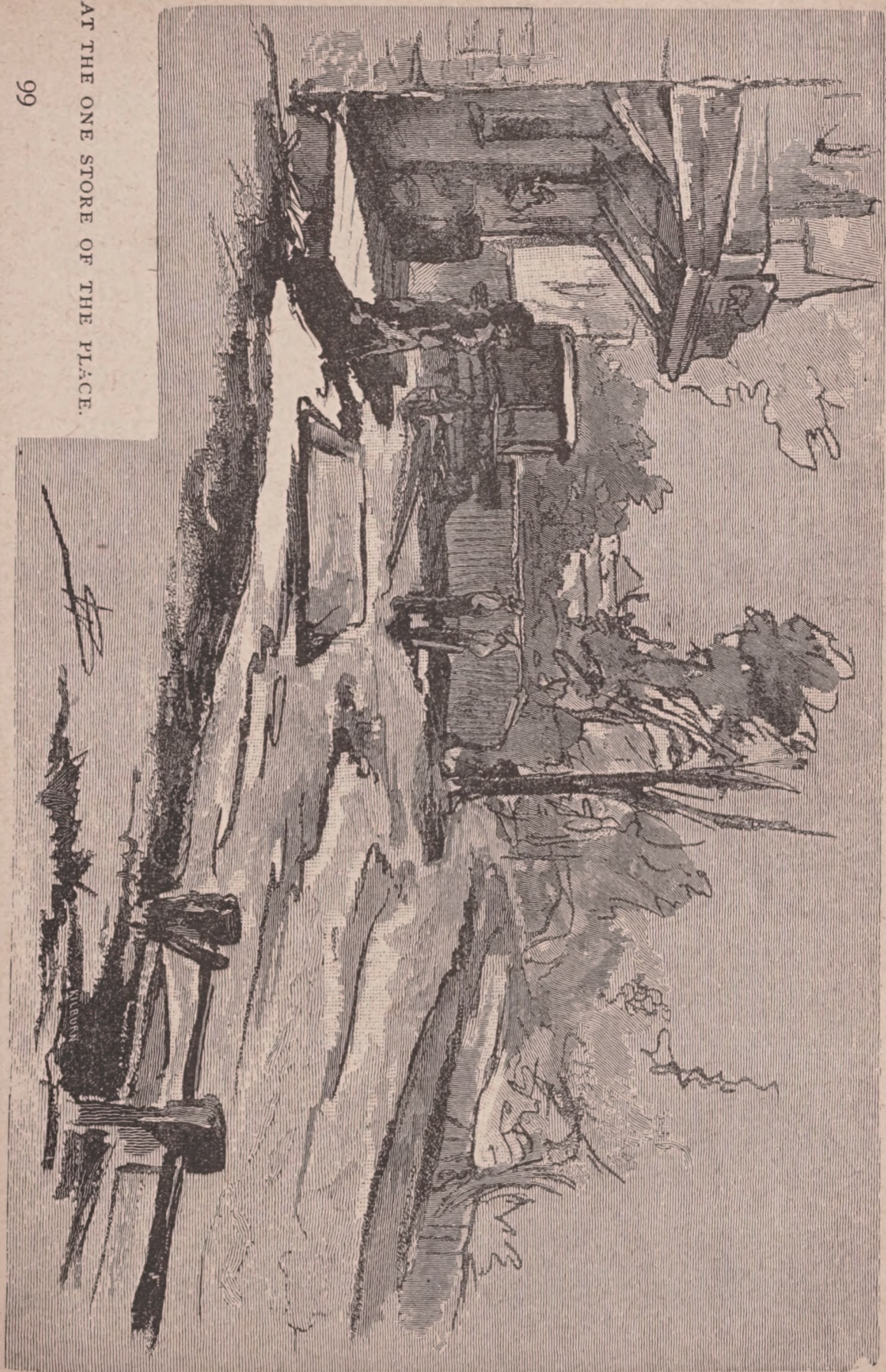
Of course a new horse must be obtained at once. Potiphar would never do. And she should want a good one — Ruggles himself must go and select him. At which point Angus, tired of listening, once more insisted upon taking part in the conversation. His pony

must be bought at the same time, he said. The governor had promised him a pony long ago. Whereupon Honor inquired ironically if it was the Governor of Massachusetts to whom he referred, remarking that his Excellency was certainly very kind.

At Never-Rest, a straggling village just this side Mizpah, they halted a moment at the one store of the place and sent Angus in for some pickles and crackers and whatever else he might find that would serve as a lunch, and then, driving on and turning in presently at a red gate, through a lane to some woods, and then by a winding and rapidly ascending cart-path, they made their way after a jolting journey up the very side of Mizpah itself, coming out suddenly at last upon a broad level shelf that ran around the very summit of the mount, and from which the "view" which Honor was so fond of, burst upon them all at once — a charming New England landscape miles and miles in extent spread out below them.

They sat for a few moments enjoying the outlook in silence. Then, Honor jumping down and signifying her intention of remaining here awhile, Ruggles led the horse around to a shady spot beneath the hill, after which, of his own accord, he brought the carriage robes and spread them on the grass under the tree where they had halted. He also brought the

AT THE ONE STORE OF THE PLACE.



cushions, and putting one upon the other made a very comfortable seat. Honor, meanwhile, had laid out their store of provisions upon the ground, and was arranging them with all the elaborateness that their quantity and character allowed. This sort of thing was just what the girl liked, and she was enjoying herself, in a quiet way, to the full. And when presently Angus cried out in dismay that they had nothing from which to drink the hop-beer (which on his own responsibility he had added to his purchases and which the storekeeper had assured him was entirely harmless and indeed wholesome in its effects), Honor laughed merrily and remarked that they would have to drink out of the bottles.

Ruggles the while had gone back to relieve Black Douglass of a portion of his harness and give him his feed. Honor had noticed before this how thoughtful he was always of his horse, and she was pleased with him for it. There was a ring of generous fellowship in her voice as, when she saw that he was through, she called to him to "come to dinner." And she was very cordial to him all the noontime. Indeed, all alone by themselves up here, quite above the world, the world's distinctions seemed to have dropped out of sight for the time, and constantly the young lady found herself talking familiarly and pleas-

antly with her coachman, quite as though they were equals. As for Ruggles, if he was conscious of any difference in her manner he did not show it. He simply talked freely and easily in turn, as though to do so were the most natural thing in the world. Indeed, in thinking of it afterward, when she got back to the ordinary level of things, and feeling a little vexed with herself, perhaps, Honor could not help wondering at the readiness with which Ruggles had adapted himself to her mood. Ordinarily, she said to herself, a person in his position thus admitted to a footing of equality would have shown his *inequality* by overstepping the line. But this Ruggles never did.

They were a long time at their lunch, although no one was very hungry. It was half-past one by Honor's watch when they finished. Afterward Angus, finding himself of no particular importance just now — a fact which bored him rather than hurt his feelings — went off over the top of the hill to attempt anew a task which was always waiting for him there, the starting down into the plain below of an immense stone that was tantalizingly balanced on the very edge of the summit. To be sure he had tried the same thing and failed many times before, but he always assumed himself to have increased enormously in



ON THE WAY TO MIZPAH.



strength whenever he revisited the spot, and hoped therefore each time to accomplish it. Honor meanwhile had gone to the edge of the shelf and was looking off into the distance. She turned presently to go to the carriage for the glasses, but Ruggles had foreseen her wish, and stood holding them beside her.

She thanked him as she took them, and adjusting them to a mark upon the barrel, she looked off toward the north and west, sweeping the horizon slowly as though in search of some particular object.

"We ought to see Trellisdale on a day like this," she said presently, more to herself than to her companion. Then she gazed long and steadily in one direction at an object so far off and indistinct that Ruggles' unassisted eye could barely make it out at all. "Yes, that certainly must be it. Take the glass, Ruggles, and see if there are not two steeples, one tall one, and one a great deal shorter and darker."

Ruggles took the glass with an eagerness which she must have noticed had she been looking at him. He found the object at once, and looked at it in silence for several moments.

"Yes," he said at length, drawing a breath almost like a sigh. "That is Trellisdale." He spoke quite positively, as though there could be no doubt.

"You can see the two steeples, then — the one taller than the other?"

"Yes," answered Ruggles briefly. He had seen something else too, that he knew perfectly well — a shining white cupola high on a hill to the right. He remembered how it had looked the last time his eyes had rested upon it, when he had turned back for an instant that winter's night nearly three years ago and saw it glittering in the moonlight.

"Yes," Honor herself repeated, as though it remained for her to finally settle the matter, "I ought to know the place. I spent a week there once, with poor Mr. Bright, the summer before he died. I shall want to drive over there some day. It is only thirty or forty miles."

She took the glass again, looking toward Trellisdale a moment more, and then around at the towns and hills that were closer and more plainly to be seen.

Ruggles seemed to enjoy the view quite as much without the glasses.

"I've seen some mighty grand scenery out there," he said, half unconsciously, and thinking of the region he had lately left behind. "But, after all, there is nothing like these Massachusetts hills and villages to me. Somehow or other, they seem to please my eye

a great deal better than anything I've ever seen in the Rocky Mountains. I suppose it's because it's home to me."

"Were you born in Massachusetts, Ruggles," asked Honor.

Ruggles rather started, and then answered deliberately, "Yes I was born and brought up within sight of this very place."

Honor looked at him a moment with a new kind of interest. She had never thought of him before as having been born and brought up anywhere.

She began to shut the glasses presently, and then, pausing, held them out again to her companion.

Ruggles shook his head. "No," said he, "I don't care for them except when I am looking for something a great way off. They only make it all look like a picture. I prefer it as it is. It looks now just like a dream."

Honor, looking around once more, caught his notion, though she had not thought of it before.

It was a still summer noon. Just the faintest breath of a breeze, perfumed with sweet-fern and pine, came up from the rocks and slopes below. A restless crow was hovering above his mate in the buttonwood yonder, just far enough off to rob his cry of its jarring note. Above and all along the horizon's edge there

were long, irregular banks of clouds, soft and beneficent, without a hint of tempest in their shape or texture.



ON MIZFAH.

“Yes,” murmured Honor. “It *is* like a dream, and we ourselves are a part of it. It is just perfect at this moment, is it not?” She looked around again with grown delight. “‘Oh, what is so rare as a

day in June!’ Have you read Lowell, Ruggles?” This last in a tone half-serious, as one asks questions to amuse one’s self.

Ruggles shook his head. He had forgotten who Lowell was, though if she had said Hosea Bigelow he would have remembered. He had spoken “The Courtin’” a long while ago at a school exhibition.

“‘There is no price set on the lavish summer,
And June may be had by the poorest comer,’”

Honor went on, quoting from the same poet another verse that occurred to her. “I wonder how much truth there is in that, after all. Do you really suppose that poor people enjoy ordinary things, the weather and nature and all that, as well as rich people?” She was in that dreamy, irresponsible mood that, within necessary limits, says just what comes into its head.

“Do you think you enjoy this scene any more than I do?” asked Ruggles simply. And it was the best possible answer. Then he went on sturdily, “I think that so long as anybody has health and strength and a free conscience he can enjoy a day like this fully. The summer is just as much mine as anybody’s.”

Honor shook her head. “That all may be,” said she. “But after all, again, do you think that those

men turning hay down there (they are well and strong and conscience-free, I've no doubt), or their wives washing dishes at home — do you think *they* enjoy the day as we do? I don't believe it ever *occurs* to them to do it."

Ruggles was silent. Honor's was a fair answer in turn, and he did not know just what to say to it.

"No," she went on decidedly. "If one is really to enjoy, one must have leisure and freedom from worry in order to do it. Do you think I could ever enjoy anything if I had to teach school for a living, or sit up all night and sew, or if I had a sick family to support? Oh, how I should *hate* to be poor!"

The remark was not a pleasing one, but, with some slight allowance for exaggeration, it expressed fairly Honor Bright's feeling about poverty, and it was a feeling that was not unnatural in her. Since her sister had married Mr. Murdoch, Honor had lived in comfort if not luxury, and from the time of old Honor Bright's death, she had had every wish gratified so far as money could do it. But, although she did not remember very much about it herself, in her earlier days she and Caroline had been very poor, and she had often heard her sister tell how worrisome and bitter had been the struggle to get along decently

and keep up appearances. Honor could not help having now some of Mrs. Murdoch's ideas as to the value of money. Besides, of her own nature, outward circumstances did make a great deal of difference to her frame of mind. She could be very happy in the sunshine. Perhaps she would have been very miserable in the shadow and darkness.

Ruggles, listening to her and watching her face, appreciated something of all this, as his answer, after a moment, showed.

"Well," said he soberly, "maybe it is different with different persons, and each one of us can only speak for himself. For my part, I don't believe I should be one bit happier for having money. When I overtook you and Black Douglass the other day, I was whistling like a good one and was perfectly contented with myself. And yet I had on a ragged hat and not a single cent in my pocket. I felt as though I would *rather* go out into the world and conquer it that way than any other. I'm not sure but if I had a ten-pound nugget this minute, I'd chuck it down the hill there. I don't *want* money. I can easily imagine, though, that it might be different with a woman — especially a woman who had always been used to — to money, instead of knocking about and roughing it as I have."

This last was said with all delicacy, as Honor felt. She was a little irritated nevertheless — perhaps at herself rather than her companion. She all at once turned abruptly and went and sat down upon the cushions.

“Ruggles,” said she, her voice and manner altogether changed, “I want you to go and see if Angus is in any mischief.”

The fact was, that what with the heat and stillness and their recent lunch, Honor was feeling very sleepy and she wished to be alone.

Ruggles obediently withdrew, his thoughts still dwelling on what had been said. It did make a difference, he said to himself again, whether it was a great strong fellow who had been knocked about as he had, who was to endure poverty, or a delicately brought up young lady like Honor Bright. Was not the hand of that Providence which he believed in, plainly to be seen in the fact that old Honor Bright’s money had been so strangely taken from him and given to this girl, after all? Ruggles had never for one moment thought of the matter in this way before; but he stood still now and thought of it with a kind of awe for several moments. And there awoke in his heart at that time a purpose which, quite faint then and ill-defined, so that he was scarcely conscious of

it himself, was destined later to grow until it took entire possession of him.

Angus was flat on his back beside his rolling-stone, fast asleep in the sun. Ruggles picked up the child's hat and placed it so as to protect his head, and then went back, and sitting down in the shade at the end of the shelf, took a piece of paper from his pocket and fell to studying it with great industry.

He was not quite out of Honor's sight, however, and that young person, not being able to go to sleep after all as she had intended, lay there on the carriage robe watching him dreamily and wondering what it was that he was so deeply interested in. Perhaps she would not have been greatly the wiser if she could have seen neatly written at the head of the sheet: "*Middle voice of βου λενω.*"

It was half-past three o'clock when at last they harnessed up and started down Mizpah again. And they took a long drive around through Bermuda Village so as not to reach the station before five.

When the train came in, Livingston Mauran and Mr. Murdoch appeared together. Livy had been into town of some errands.

"Sorry we can't give you a seat, Livy," said Mr. Murdoch, as they came across the platform. "We appear to be all full."

"Oh, I don't mind," answered Livy. "I can go over in the stage. I expected the buggy over, but it don't seem to be here."

Then Mr. Murdoch took his place on the back seat beside Honor, and they drove off.

"Any letters?" the latter inquired, as soon as they were fairly started. That was always the first question at night. Her letters often came to Mr. Murdoch's town office.

"Yes, one," was the answer, and he handed her a heavy, square missive.

"It's from Densie Drew," she said, and she tore it open. "Why, Ruggles!"

The last exclamation was uttered abruptly and in a tone of almost angry reproach. Ruggles had reached over with the whip and given Black Douglass a cut across the shoulders, a thing he had not done before since he had known the horse.

Ruggles made no answer, however, but looked straight ahead, having, or pretending to have, all he could do to attend to his driving.

Honor returned to her letter. "It's from Densie Drew," she repeated. "And what do you think! She is coming the second week in July, and will stay until after my birthday. Won't it be jolly?"

As for Ruggles, he was still looking straight ahead

and seeing not a thing. Was it possible there could be two persons in the world who were named Densie Drew? If not, then he was likely, the second week in July, to meet an old acquaintance.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE FLY-LEAF.

IT was the next forenoon, while Mrs. Murdoch with her fancy-work and Honor with her book were sitting on the piazza, that Livingston Mauran came over. Mrs. Murdoch saw him first as he came up the path, and called out to welcome him. She was always glad to see Livingston.

“Ah!” cried she, “here he is, now.” She had been thinking of him a moment before. “I wonder if he has any news for us. Livy is almost always full of news.”

“News,” repeated Livy, catching the last word and guessing at the rest. “I should think I had! I saw Mort Wetherell yesterday. He and I went around to Parker’s for dinner, and we talked over the summer’s campaign. They’re coming out next week—and lots of other people. Whew! July has be-

gun in good earnest. It's hot as hasty-pudding!" Livy's tone was even more languid and drawling than usual.

He came up the steps, and throwing himself into a steamer chair that stood there, picked up a fan and began fanning himself much more gracefully than men ordinarily do. Mrs. Murdoch looked at him with a sort of fond admiration. And indeed Honor was watching him too, half-lazily but with plenty of interest. People often watched Livy, even in spite of themselves. He was such a perfect specimen of his kind—a well-looking, well-dressed, aristocratic young fellow without a particle of self-consciousness amid all his airs and graces, exactly fitted for his present occupation—sitting on the piazza, of a summer morning, and talking to ladies over their novels and fancy-work. To-day he wore a stylish sacquesuit of black Scotch, showing at the neck a neat checked shirt with low-cut collar. His hat was a becoming one of fine white straw, and his low shoes with socks of the latest fashionable pattern were unexceptionable.

"Livy," said Honor, laughing, "excuse me—it's none of my business, of course—but I do believe that is the *seventh* hat I've seen you wear since I came home!"

"Our hat-tree does bear pretty freely this year," answered Livingston.

"Never mind the hats," put in Mrs. Murdoch. "You can't say, Honor, but that Livy's are always becoming. Tell us about the Wetherells. You say they are coming out next week?"

"Yes, bag and baggage; and will stay until October, except that they'll go to Mt. Desert a week or two in August. And Sadie had had a letter from Alice Norcross. They were to sail the twenty-third, and will come right out here. Won't it be jolly to have Merrie Cutler back again? I told her aunt Minturn yesterday that I could never live through another summer in Random without her. Mort says his mother has invited a cousin of his to come out and spend July with them. He's at Cheshire—one of those fellows, I suppose, that go about all the time in a gray uniform trimmed with black, looking like a letter-carrier's, and feeling so grand.—Where *did* you get that tidy-pattern, Mrs. Murdoch? It's *lovely*. Doesn't that floss look elegant on that crimson satin? What is it, poppies and wheat? Oh dear! Can't you throw it over here so I can see it?"

Livy got up, however, and went and sat down on the step beside Mrs. Murdoch's chair to examine the tidy. He discussed it further, and described some

similar designs he had seen of late, running on about them in a manner that showed his complete knowledge of the subject.

"I wonder if the Littlefields will have any boarders this summer," said Mrs. Murdoch presently.

"There's nobody come yet," said Livy, "but he told me a week ago that he should have a house-full by the middle of the month."

"Mr. Littlefield was along this morning," observed Honor. "The Harrimans are here already. They came by the late train last night. And the Maxeys and Potters are coming immediately after the Fourth. What people can want to stay in town for on the Fourth of July, I can't see. It's bad enough in the country."

"Dear me," exclaimed Livingston, "that reminds me. We had a letter from mother yesterday. She and Mamie will be home to-night and she expects you all to come over and sit on our steps Fourth of July evening and see us shoot off fireworks. The governor has ordered more than a ton to be sent out."

"Indeed!" cried a new voice, that of Angus who had a moment before drawn near. "The Governor of Massachusetts, do you mean? His Excellency is very kind, I am sure."

At which everybody laughed, Honor clapping her

hands. And Master Murdoch felt so proud and puffed up at having said so evidently good a thing, that for a whole minute longer he quite forgot what he had come for.

"Mamma," he at length cried, "is there a Latin dictionary in the library? Ruggles wants it."

"I don't know, I am sure," said Mrs. Murdoch.

"Yes, there is," spoke up Honor. "It's on the lower shelf at the right of the bay-window. 'Andrews' Latin Lexicon.' You can get it yourself, Angus."

"Do your servants have the use of your library?" inquired Livy, as Angus disappeared.

The plain irony of this remark irritated Honor.

"Yes," said she, "they do if they want it. There isn't anybody else here that is likely to use it."

"Well, but," protested Livingston, "servants have their place, you know. The idea of his sending Angus up here to get a book from the library! Anybody would think he owned the whole place. I think it's rather presuming, to say the least."

"Yes," declared Mrs. Murdoch, awakened now to a realization of the startling fact. "It *is* presuming. I think I had better tell Angus to say to him that—"

"You had better do no such thing!" interposed Honor, warmly. "You don't know what he said to Angus. If he sent him for the book at all, he told

him to ask for it, you may depend. Ruggles is never disrespectful in any way. He knows his place perfectly well and always keeps it. As for the book, I don't know what he wants it for, but if it is to study and improve himself, then I honor him for it, and I'll help him all I can. He shall have a dozen lexicons if he wants them. And I think some other people might profit by his example in the matter of studiousness." Honor had gradually worked herself into quite a little tempest of wrath, and this last, a stroke at poor Livy himself, was more feminine than fair. The latter, three weeks before, had come out of the entrance examinations at Harvard heavily conditioned.

Livingston looked up at her a good deal bewildered.

"Well, but," he began again, "see here, now, you wouldn't want all your servants talking Latin and Greek, would you?"

"No," said Honor, smiling in spite of herself. "You and I couldn't understand them at all if they did. But I mean every word I've said about Ruggles. He's as good as gold! And—"

Honor stopped all at once, turning red as fire. Ruggles himself had suddenly come around the corner of the house. He was going toward the road.

He lifted his hat respectfully as he passed by, and in his face and manner there was no indication of his having heard these last words, although it was difficult to see how he could have helped it.

The next instant Angus, with a big volume in his arms, came out the door, and seeing Ruggles, called out to him :

“ Here, Ruggles — Ruggles ! Here’s the dictionary. I’ve got it for you.”

Ruggles turned about, hearing his name, and then, comprehending, came back.

“ I did not want the dictionary,” said he. “ At least I did not wish you to get it.” Then, seeming to understand from the faces about him how matters were, he took off his hat again, speaking to Mrs. Murdoch. “ I did not send Angus for the book,” he went on. “ He heard me say I wished I had a Latin dictionary, and he started off before I could stop him. Indeed, I did not know what he meant to do.” Then, seeing Honor take the book from Angus and turn toward himself, he shook his head. “ No, Miss Bright, excuse me. I would rather not use the book.” And having thus with perfect clearness and dignity said his say, Ruggles turned again and walked quickly away before anybody thought of replying.

Honor opened the lexicon which she still held.

"I thought so," said she. This is my own book, the one I used to read Virgil with at school here. Angus, take this up to Ruggles' room and leave it on the table. I am going to make him a present of it. No, you needn't either. I'll do it myself." And in an instant this impulsive young lady was marching off toward the stable with her lexicon.

"Where is his room?" Livingston inquired of Mrs. Murdoch. "Oh, yes, in the barn. I believe I'll go with her. I want to see what sort of a place it is. Honor has been boasting how she has fixed it up."

So he got up and followed Honor out to the stable and up the stairway to Ruggles' room. Honor had put the lexicon on the table and was just turning to come away again.

"Why, you have fixed it up nicely, haven't you?" said Livingston, standing and looking about him upon the pretty curtains, the books and the pictures on the walls, and the single bedstead with its snowy spread in the corner. "How neat Elspeth always keeps everything!"

"Elspeth has nothing to do with this," said Honor. "He takes entire care of it himself."

"Is that so?" Livy moved toward the table. "I wonder if he does study Latin. Why, here's a volume of 'Cicero's Orations!' And what's this? 'Greek

Prose Composition !' he must have got these second-hand in town. He never brought 'em all in that black bag of his." Then he picked up a smaller volume, bound in well-worn leather and with a tarnished clasp upon it. "This looks like a Bible or hymn-book," he ran on. "Is this wonderful driver of yours a preacher and singer too?" Then he suddenly uttered an exclamation. "See here, Honor! What do you make of this?" And he held out the book to her, open at its very beginning.

Honor looked and saw, written in pencil upon the fly-leaf, in a big, flourishing school-boy hand, her own name, "Honor Bright."

"He is entirely respectful! He is good as gold! He knows his place and keeps it!" drawled Livy with triumphant enjoyment, repeating as nearly as he could her own words of a few minutes before. "Well, I must say that is a liberty I should hardly take myself—scribbling your name upon the fly-leaves of my books. However, perhaps I'm not as fond of books or of—you as this accomplished coachman of yours." Livy laughed heartily, feeling that this time he had the best of it.

Honor said not a word in reply. The fact of her name being written there struck her exactly as it had her companion, and she was mortified and angry.



"SEE HERE, HONOR! WHAT DO YOU MAKE OF THIS?" 125

With a sudden impulse she seized the book and tore the offending fly-leaf completely out. Then, throwing the book itself upon the table again and taking up her lexicon, she moved toward the door.

"Come," said she, "we have been here long enough."

"But what are you going to do about it?" asked Livy. "Shall you discharge him?"

"No, indeed!" was the answer. "That would be *too* ridiculous. But he will know and keep his place hereafter."

Then she led the way down-stairs again and back toward the house. On the way, half-mechanically, not knowing what else to do with it just then, she opened the lexicon and shut the fly-leaf away between its covers.

CHAPTER IX.

IN WHICH THE HEROINE APPEARS TO GREATER DIS-
ADVANTAGE THAN EVER.

WHAT *is* the matter with Honor? She is as touchy as a box of fireworks lately."

It was Mrs. Murdoch who asked the question, standing all alone in the upper hall. The simile was suggested, of course, by the proximity of the Fourth; the words themselves by the fact that Honor had just favored her with a display of temper really quite uncalled for, answering her sharply, and then going into her room and slamming the door behind her in a manner of which a young lady of her education and prospects ought to have been ashamed. Honor had been as irritable as she could be for the last two days, and this morning she was worse than ever.

Mrs. Murdoch, indeed, was not the only person

made to realize this. Angus had come rushing upstairs a while before to show his aunt Honor a Fourth of July picture that Ruggles had drawn for him. It was a very clever production indeed, entitled "The Chinaman and the Hoodlums," and representing a gentleman of dress and features unmistakably Celestial running with all his might before a bunch of exploding fire-crackers tied to his queue, while a group of street arabs stood regarding their work with glee, and a second Celestial looked on in amazed terror from a door near by over which the word "Washee" was conspicuously posted. Angus had come to Honor first with his picture, feeling sure she would enjoy it with him; and the poor fellow had been really troubled when she declined even to look at it.

"I don't care to see any of Ruggles's pictures," she had said coldly. "And you musn't bother me now."

And still later this same morning, Livingston too came in for his share of ill-treatment. Honor had taken her "Atlantic" and gone down to the Nook; and Livy, coming over a while after and learning her whereabouts from Donald who was at work before the house, followed her there. She was sitting on a rock near the hammock with the magazine unopened upon her lap. She returned his pleasant "good

morning" in a tone and manner far from encouraging; but Livy did not notice it at all. He was always deliciously unconscious of other people's moods.

"So here is where you are?" he began.

"Yes; I thought I would like to be by myself."

Livy laughed. "That is a pretty broad hint," observed he.

"Is it?" said Honor.

"But I never take hints," he went on serenely. Then he sat down in the hammock. "What a pretty pattern that muslin is! By the way, have you seen this new style of dress—Wamsutta? or, more elegantly, Jeddo crape. They're of a sort of unbleached material that comes very cheap—eight or ten cents a yard—and made up over colored cambric. Why don't you have one before they get to be common? You could make it up over red. They're really quite the thing, just now."

"Thank you," said Honor curtly. "If I am to have a man-milliner, I should prefer Worth."

"That's just the way," complained Livingston. "Women dress for men's eyes altogether, and yet they'll never take a suggestion from them about dress. Speaking of Worth, I know several ladies who have their dresses all made in Paris. You remember my cousin, Mrs. Manton? You should have seen—"



IN THE NOOK.

"Livy," interrupted Honor, "excuse me for breaking in upon you, but do you know what Joaquin Miller said once to a young lady? He told her she *must* tell some lies, for she talked so much that there wasn't truth enough to last her."

"I suppose you mean by that that I talk too much," said Livy, good-naturedly. "But somebody has got to talk. Just think how stupid it would be if we all sat in our chairs staring at each other and saying nothing. And if you think I talk too much, I am equally sure that you talk too little. Why, I've known you to sit for half an hour, thinking all the time and not saying a single word! One would think you had something to conceal and were afraid you would let it out if you opened your mouth."

"Nobody will ever suspect *you* of anything of the kind," retorted Honor. "I doubt if you ever had a single thought in all your life, that you did not instantly give it to the world."

"Oh yes, I have," declared Livy. "I was thinking, for instance, of your Crichton of a coachman all the way down here, but I haven't told you what I thought."

"It's just as well. I don't at all care to hear."

"I wonder if he is getting out his Latin this morning."

"We'll talk about somebody else, if you please," Honor said in a distinct sort of way.

"Have you succeeded in teaching him his place yet?"

Honor raised her chin a little, but made no reply. Her silence was dangerous, if Livy had but known it.

"From what Angus tells me," he went heedlessly on, "you find plenty to talk about with Ruggles, when you are out riding. Really, Honor, you make too much of him. You'll never teach him his place in that way. Take my advice and —"

Honor was on her feet now, magnificent with wrath.

"Livingston Mauran!" she cried. "When all the rest of the people in the world are dead save you and I, and all the books are burned up, and I myself have lost every vestige of sense and reason, then possibly I may come to *you* for advice; but until then I wish you would keep it to yourself! As for what Angus tells you, I am surprised that you, who claim to be a gentleman, should have condescended to make him your *spy*! Now, you'll excuse me, but if I can't be alone here, I must go elsewhere."

And suiting the action to her last words, Honor turned and left the place.

“Now, that was well done!” murmured Livy, fanning himself with his straw hat. “How her eyes did flash! I wonder if she singed her eyelashes!”

There was one other person still whom Honor was destined to meet while in her present amiable mood. This was Ruggles himself. He came down the walk from the house just as she reached the stables. He lifted his hat, and bade her a pleasant good morning very much as Livy had done. He was in an especially happy frame of mind to-day.

Honor, however, merely inclined her head in acknowledgment of his salutation. Then, before they were fairly by each other she halted.

“Ruggles,” said she deliberately, “I would prefer that the *servants* about the place should always wait until they are spoken to before they speak to me.”

That was all she said, but it was enough. Ruggles stood staring after her, hurt and amazed, a deep flush showing itself through the tan on his face. He had felt that for two days past Honor had been treating him with coolness, but he had not thought much about it. Conscious all the time of his real position, any ordinary snubbing he might receive in his assumed character he was prepared to take with equanimity, and it generally only amused him. But this that Honor had just said to him, was so uncalled for, as it

seemed to him, and so evidently meant to hurt him and put him down, that he felt it through and through. To his pain and amazement instantly succeeded a feeling of pride and indignation, and with a sudden impulse he took a step forward as if to follow her.

“Miss Bright,” he said.

She must have heard him, but she paid no attention.

The next instant he stopped again, glad that she had not. It gave him time to think better of his impulse; and he turned and went on to the barn, gnawing his lip and resolving that she should have no occasion to reprove him for familiarity in future.

As for Honor, she little knew how near she had been at that moment to hearing Thomas Ruggles give an account of himself that would have astonished her.

And now what shall I say here of my heroine? For there comes over me at this moment as never before so far in the story this feeling I have spoken of, that she needs apologizing for. Ruggles had said sententiously to himself as he went on to the harness-room and took down a bridle that needed oiling, that his mistress had “made a goose of herself,” and I certainly must acknowledge that the phrase expressed

the fact of the case tolerably well. And I fancy the intelligent reader thinking of the matter in pretty much the same way. I can almost hear at this moment the words "silly," "snobbish," "ill-tempered," and others like them coming from lips that will curl above this page sometime hence. Yet, in spite of this, I shall not turn back to alter a single word I have said heretofore in praise of Honor Bright; and I still believe that every reader will be her true admirer when the story is finished.

A word further as to what *was* the matter with Honor. To speak plainly, I suppose that Ruggles was the matter. This is not a love-story. There will not be a particle of love-making in it from beginning to end. Indeed, for that matter, it will end exactly where a love-story would properly commence. Honor Bright was not in love with her coachman and not likely to be. Pray do not think it. And yet, on the other hand (and this is perfectly natural,) she was by no means as indifferent to him as she herself supposed.

By Ruggles's coming she had suddenly been brought into contact with a person of her own age who was, in point of fact, more congenial to her than any one else about her. She was with this person several hours at least of every day, and they were the hours when she

felt freest and enjoyed herself most. He was manly, intelligent, fine. She may not have used these words of him, or even distinctly realized that he was all this; but she had *felt* it, consciously or unconsciously, from the first, for she was fine too. All this being so, it is not difficult to conceive that she should have come gradually to attach a certain value to his good opinion, and be affected more or less by whatever seemed to be his frame of mind toward her. Then, in the midst of all, there suddenly comes up a fact which it is impossible to doubt or explain and which, though simple enough in itself, seems necessarily to indicate qualities — vanity and presumption at least — which she had not believed Ruggles to possess. Mortified and offended, she could not help showing, and indeed wished to show him, that she looked upon him as an inferior who needed to be taught who and what he was. And yet, all the while he being in reality just what she had first believed him, her instincts still insisted upon his worth and gave her the constant feeling that she was doing him an injustice and appearing herself in any but a favorable light. This, so far as I am able to analyze it, is what was the “matter” with Honor. She was displeased with herself; and people who are that are generally displeased with everybody else.

Honor felt better, however, after lunch and a little nap in her room. She met Angus as she was coming down-stairs between two and three o'clock. That young gentleman summoned all his dignity and was going by her without a word, but she took his face in her hands.

"Angus," said she smiling, "I was real rude to you this morning. I'm sorry. Will you forgive me?"

Angus hesitated without returning the smile.

"Will you take me to ride with you if I do?" asked he, disposed to make terms.

"I'm not going to ride to-day. But we'll take a walk together, if you like."

"All right," said Angus. "I forgive you then. A gentleman always accepts an apology. I can't show you the picture now, though. I told Ruggles about it, and he said if I'd tear it up he'd make me a better one sometime. He can draw like a brick."

"Never mind the picture," answered Honor. "And I don't think a brick could draw at all. Now, where shall we go? I've a basket of things for Granny Zeb. Shall we go over there?"

Granny Zeb was an old negro woman who lived on a cross-road over south of Random Pond. She was very poor, and Honor often took her provisions or clothing. The old lady had one child, a good-

natured but as yet quite worthless youngster, "full of the Old Jim Crow," as she herself described him.

Honor and Angus had a pleasant walk across the



GRANNY ZEB.

fields and along the shore of the pond, and made quite a call upon the old negro woman. From there they made their way across to the cottage of Miss

Prudence Withers, a maiden lady living all by herself, on whom Honor had for some time been intending to call. Here they stopped for something more than half an hour. As they at length moved to go, Angus, with characteristic frankness, complained of being hungry (he had missed his lunch that day), and Miss Withers brought him a generous piece of apple-pie which, she told him, was made of apples from a tree a hundred years old, a fact which Master Angus pondered deeply as he devoured the pie.

It was half-past-four by Honor's watch when at last they turned homeward. Their path would still lie mostly across the lots (it would have been a long way around by the road), but in a direction somewhat different from that in which they had come.

After leaving the road, they walked slowly down a long lane, at the end of which they could see a pair of bars. The afternoon was warm but very lovely. There was no sign of rain yet, and the vegetation around was beginning to have a burned look. Over in a field beyond them two men were loading some hay, and from farther off still came up the sound of a mowing-machine. One of the men on the wagon shouted out something as they walked along; but they did not understand, and indeed were by no means certain he was addressing them at all. And

presently they were out of sight and hearing. What the man had called out was, that there was a bull down in the next lot that they had better keep clear of; but his companion had said that there was a sign nailed upon the bar-way which would warn them, so the shout was not repeated.

Unfortunately however, when Honor and Angus, continuing their way in blissful ignorance of the vicinity of any monster of whom they need stand in fear, got to the bar-way, there was no sign there. If they had come down the same lane the day before, they would have seen upon the post a board on which was rather unskilfully painted the words, "*There is a bull in here that is dangerous. Keep out.*" But some mischievous boys, only the night before, had taken this board and affixed it to the front door of Farmer Landers himself, a red-faced, not over popular old fellow who owned the bull. And the warning had not as yet been returned to its proper place.

CHAPTER X.

WHEREIN TRUTH IS NO LESS EXCITING THAN FICTION.

THE reader however has, I suppose, so far the advantage of the heroine and Master Murdoch as to be by this time fully warned that a no less ignoble and commonplace object than a bull is almost immediately to appear upon the scene of this story. I have thus carefully sought to announce the fact beforehand, because I feel the necessity of preparing the reader for it and, for my own sake, making something of an apology. Adventures with bulls are so exceedingly uncommon in real country life and so almost inevitable in stories of country life! Yet I am certain that the fair-minded reader would not have me omit any truth from my narrative simply because that truth is not as strange as fiction. If so unreasonable and determined an animal as a bull insists upon coming into this story, I really do not think I am called upon to stand in his way.

The bar-way formed the entrance to a large pas-

ture, with nothing particular to be seen in it save a clump of trees away over at its lowest end under which a single beast of the field seemed to be feeding in peaceful solitude. Angus observed that "there was a cow down there," but Honor set off toward the upper corner of the lot quite untroubled. Had the animal been nearer, she might have felt a little nervous. All girls are, I believe, more or less afraid of cows. But this cow was too far off to give her any apprehension.

They walked quietly along, and had traversed something more than half the distance diagonally across the lot, when Angus suddenly discovered a human figure standing at that moment on top the stone wall near the point toward which their steps were bent.

"I do believe there's Livy coming to meet us," said he.

Honor stopped short and bit her lip.

"No," she replied, "it is Ruggles."

"He's running," cried Angus. "Come, let's us run too!" And he caught Honor by the dress.

"No," said Honor coldly. And then all at once something suggested a different interpretation of the actions of the approaching figure. Ruggles was waving his arms about and shouting in a manner quite extraordinary.



"SHORT-HORNED AND SQUARE-SHOULDERED."

"What is he saying?" asked the girl in sudden alarm. And half instinctively they looked behind them. Then Honor uttered a little cry and turned pale. Down yonder, by the clump of trees, the "cow" was no longer to be seen; but a great deal nearer to them an animal unmistakably a bull, short-horned and square-shouldered, was coming down upon them at a gallop, his head up and his tail standing out behind in a manner that left no doubt of the existence in his mind of a definite and probably hostile purpose.

"See here!" screamed Angus. "'Tain't a cow at all! It's a *bull*!"

Honor's face was as white as it well could be considering her complexion. She realized the situation at once and fully. She was badly frightened—who would not have been!—but her good sense and her nerves did not desert her. If they remained where they then were, the bull would be upon them in a few moments. Their only chance was to run for the wall; and already the animal was no farther from them than they from the nearest point of safety. She seized Angus by the hand.

"Angus," said she in a low intense tone, "we must get to the wall if we can. He may be dangerous."

"Come on, then," cried Angus, his voice pitched

high with excitement. Then with a determined jerk, he freed his hand. "Let go my hand, though. I can run better and so can you." Angus was more of a man than she gave him credit for, or else he did not realize the danger.

Then off they started, turning abruptly half to the right toward a place where the wall seemed to be broken a little, and fairly flying over the ground at a pace that Honor at least felt with a sinking at the heart that she could not possibly keep up.

And all the while, as she ran, her mind was thoroughly active. She wondered wildly whether it would be her fate to be tossed or to be trampled to death, if they were overtaken. She thought of the scarlet sash that she wore; and, remembering that bulls were said to be aggravated by anything red, she mechanically sought to unloose it from her waist, presently desisting, however, as it occurred to her that, if she retained it, it might serve to draw the animal's attention from Angus to herself. Glancing eagerly toward Ruggles, she saw that he had changed his direction so as to intercept them, and that he was already quite near them. And then she turned her head a single instant over her shoulder, and saw with terror that the bull too had swerved a little to cut them off, and she could now hear with a dreadful

distinctness the sound of his heavy hoofs as he came bounding on. She looked straight ahead again towards the broken place in the wall. O, how could they ever reach it in time!

Suddenly Ruggles was close beside them, his hat off and his hair flying, breathing hard but slackening his pace now to accommodate it to theirs. He put out his hand and took Honor's sunshade from her, closing it as he ran. He kept it in his hand however. One does not throw away even so frail a weapon at such a time, when it is the only one. As for Honor, she felt at once how much more easily she could run without it, and wondered she had not thought to close it.

"You must run faster than this, Miss Bright!" Ruggles's voice was hard and collected, and the words were a command rather than a suggestion. Then he looked toward their pursuer. "He's getting pretty near. Don't worry. I'll manage him, if he catches us. Only *run*. You *must* run, Miss Bright."

"I cannot!" There was a sort of bitterness in Honor's heart toward him as she gasped the words. He ran so easily himself. Did he not know that her limbs seemed at every moment about to give way beneath her, and that it seemed to her that she could not draw another breath? And the wall was still

several rods away. How utterly useless it was for her to try to reach it!

"You must help Angus and get him to the wall," she managed to say. And then she would have sunk down and left them to go on without her. But Ruggles all at once took hold of her wrist with a grip that seemed to communicate some of his strength to hers.

"I shall help *you*," he said. "Angus will do well enough. Won't you, Angus?"

And Angus, cap in hand, nodded cheerily without looking round. He ran longer races than this every day of his life, and he was in perfect training. And so Honor, with Ruggles's strong hold dragging her on faster than she could possibly have gone herself, gathered new courage and struggled on.

Thus they ran, and it was moments rather than minutes that were passing; and now the wall was almost within their reach. Only a few rods more between them and it; and then somehow to climb the wall and they were safe. The thought was fresh hope and strength. And yet, there were those horrible footsteps, so near them now that it seemed the next instant must bring the pursuer upon them, and Honor fancied she could almost hear the monster's breathing. It seemed to her as though she must look over her

shoulder once more ; but Ruggles spoke again almost fiercely :

“ Don’t look back ! For your life, don’t look back ! It’s only a few feet farther, now ! Now mind what I say to you ! You and Angus must get over the wall for yourselves — as fast as you can. Don’t wait for each other. It won’t do ! Angus, do you understand ? You must run the rest of it yourself, Miss Bright. It’s only a step. I beg of you not to give up ! ”

He dropped her wrist suddenly, and Honor felt rather than saw that he had halted and turned upon the enemy.

Once more she summoned strength and resolution and staggered on. Then the wall was right there before them, Angus was on its top with a triumphant shout, she herself, she scarcely knew how, dragged herself upon and over it, and then, with a great cry she sank exhausted to the earth.

As for Ruggles, he had halted some thirty feet from the wall and turned squarely on the enemy, with no thought of himself in any way but with a grim resolve that the bull should be stopped at any cost. What the young fellow did was done so quickly and naturally that it seemed almost nothing ; but it was really a very clever and courageous performance and entirely successful.

The enraged animal was not ten feet away when the lad turned to meet him. Ruggles caught sight of a large stone on the ground at his feet. He flung down the sunshade, and seizing this stone with both hands, lifted it high above his head. Then in almost the same instant, he brought it forward and hurled it with all his strength straight at the bit of hard, flat forehead that now, held low down, was close upon him. Then he leaped lightly to one side; the bull rushed heavily by and then turned, stunned and bellowing; and before the animal could recover from the shock, Ruggles was running like a deer for the wall, which he cleared at a jump, and halted beside Honor herself who was but just getting up from where she had fallen.

“Good for you, Ruggles!” cried Angus who had been quite alive to the whole transaction. “I reckon you gave him a good head-ache!” The bull was now marching up and down in assumed unconcern on the other side of the wall.

“Yes,” answered Ruggles, “I reckon I did. When we get to the house we’ll have Elspeth make him a strong cup of tea. That will cure him.” He spoke lightly, for he perceived that Honor, still panting and trembling, was about to speak; and he

somehow wished she might not. Honor was not to be prevented however.

"You have saved us from—from a dreadful fate, Ruggles," said she. Her voice was faint, and she as yet had scarcely breath enough to speak with. "I shall never forget it. O, if anything had happened to Angus! I should never have forgiven myself."

Ruggles had sobered as she spoke; and he now stood in silence, his eyes cast down, not in confusion but as though he were thinking. And indeed he was. He was thinking of what she had said to him that morning in the carriage path. He was proud too, and it was his turn now instead of hers. He was glad that he had been able to serve her and glad of her gratitude, but he would not show it.

"It was nothing at all," said he in a moment. "I've handled dozens of 'em down in New Mexico. If you don't want anything more, Miss Bright, I'll go back now. The bull can't get over the wall."

And so, as she said nothing further, he went off, carelessly whistling, along the path.

Honor, taking Angus by the hand, presently followed. And as they went along, she charged the latter not to mention the afternoon's adventure at the house. Mrs. Murdoch would never let them go out together again, she said, if she heard of it. Probably,

beyond this, Honor had a feeling that she did not want to have the affair talked about at home.

Angus readily promised to keep it secret, and was so mindful of his word that when asked by his father at dinner what wonderful adventures he had met with, he contented himself with gravely narrating how, over at Miss Withers's, he had been treated to a piece of apple-pie that was a hundred years old, an assertion which provoked not a little merriment.

The Fourth turned out to be a very quiet day at Hollownook after all. Mr. Murdoch was called away to Vermont by a telegram that came while he was at breakfast; and one of Mrs. Murdoch's sick headaches kept Honor in the house all day, and prevented their going over to the Maurans in the evening.

Ruggles, too, seemed disposed to keep his room; so that upon Master Angus alone fell the duty of celebrating for the family. It is scarcely necessary to say that the young gentleman bore the burden cheerfully and acquitted himself with distinguished credit.

On the afternoon of the fifth there came a dispatch from Mr. Murdoch directing Ruggles to join him at Brattleboro immediately, as he wanted to buy a horse. So the coachman packed up and set off

early the next morning. And as, after helping Mr. Murdoch select the horse, he drove the animal home by road, it was almost a week before he got back to Hollownook again.

Then, somehow or other, with the gayer times that seemed to have fallen upon the place, and a sort of coldness that had come to be between his young mistress and himself, Ruggles began to feel that he was really learning his "place" at last. And so he came and went about the place, a model servant, careful to perform all his duties, always respectful, grave and silent. And in his heart all the while he kept and cherished the great plans he had formed for himself.

As for Honor, she felt this change too, and it irritated and troubled her. But she was too proud to show it. Besides she had a great many other things to think of just now. She had not forgotten the adventure with the bull, and she had sincerely meant to say more of it to Ruggles. But there never came a time when it seemed possible to do so; and so the days passed by and presently the incident, as she looked back upon it, seemed to her more like a terrible dream than a reality.

CHAPTER XI.

DENSIE DREW.

DENSIE Drew was a school-friend of Honor's. When the latter first went to Bishopsthorpe and was introduced to a group of other girls a few minutes after her arrival, one of them came forward and claimed acquaintance at once. She had known an Honor Bright once upon a time, she said,—a young gentleman at Trellisdale, Massachusetts. Was he any relation of Honor's? And Honor, very glad to meet somebody who had known the Honor Bright whose name and inheritance had fallen to her, and of whom she had always wished to hear something more, listened eagerly to all that Densie, glibly running on, could tell her of him — how he had been an old "flame" of hers at their young folks' parties, always calling her up in "Post-Office" and slapping her hands in "Copenhagen," and asking to see her



home afterwards. And she had been so shocked when she heard of his being lost at sea. He had written some lines in her album when she left Trellisdale which seemed almost prophetic. Indeed, he must have had it in mind — his running away to sea — when he wrote them. She had them yet and would show them to Honor some time. And then Honor told more fully her own relation to the lad; and the conversation was the beginning of an intimacy between the two girls which later became a decided friendship. This was not the less natural perhaps, because they were in almost every respect quite unlike. Densie was fair instead of dark, rather undersized, always had a bit of blue about her, was sprightly and talkative, fond of society and a hater of books.

Miss Drew was to come on the thirteenth. Ruggles, the coachman, had looked forward to her arrival with a good deal of interest and some concern. For the first time, he was to meet somebody in his new life who had known him in his old. *Would she recognize him?* That was the question that troubled him. Sometimes he said to himself that it was impossible — he was at least twelve inches taller than he had been three years ago, and was entirely changed in every way; and then, again, he remembered what

a shrewd and capable young person the Densie Drew he had known was, and, complete as was the disguise time had given him, he felt sure her bright eyes must see through it.

At any rate, however, there was nothing to be done but to wait and see. And even if she recognized him, why, he was doing nothing that he was ashamed of. Only he would have been truly sorry to have had the facts of the case come out just now. Indeed he had pretty well settled in his mind a purpose that they never should come out at all. Ruggles was a strange fellow. What if he should take it into his obstinate head to leave Honor Bright in undisturbed possession of his name and his money, and try his hand at making a name and fortune for himself? He had meant all that he had said when they were on Mizpah together, and it would be just like him to do such a thing.

His suspense however was over very quickly when at last the time came; and a single minute after the train had stopped seemed to settle the whole matter, and assure him that his fears were groundless.

Densie came across the platform with Honor a little in advance of Mr. Murdoch, who was carrying her bags and bundles. Ruggles knew her at once; for although she was grown some, her demonstrative

ways were just the same. She gave Honor's "turn-out" a quick, critical look as she came up. That was the way she always used to look at things the first time. And an expression of entire approval showed itself in her face as she did so, especially as her glance dwelt a single instant on the trim-looking young fellow who sat holding the reins. This was the "new coachman" that Honor had written her about. Then she put her foot upon the step and sprang into the phaeton unassisted. As for Ruggles, the single instant that his eyes had met hers had, at least for the present, quite set his mind at rest. It was plain that she thought him a stranger.

Miss Drew, born to rule wherever she was, lost no time in asserting her sway at Hollownook and defining her policy. Honor had written her that she would find it very quiet at Random—nothing to do but eat and sleep and read and ride, a state of things that would have quite appalled Miss Densie save for her entire confidence in her own ability to remedy it. She at once raised her voice for Reform.

"*I'll* set things going," she said to Honor, as they went up-stairs that night. And she kept her friend awake for a whole hour, questioning her as to the number and capabilities of the young people in the

neighborhood, and discussing plans for bringing them together and making the best of them.

Miss Densie took Angus aside immediately after breakfast the next morning, and showed him a paper of chocolates.

"These are very nice," said she. "I got them at Copeland's yesterday, eighty cents a pound. I am very fond of them, too. But I am going to divide them with *you*. It's because I like you, you know. Now, you know Livingston Mauran?" — Densie did not know him but she meant to. "I want you to go over and tell him that he is wanted here. Don't say anything about who sent you. Do you understand?"

Angus nodded and took the chocolates, bestowing a rather funny look upon Densie at the same time.

"I'll tell him," said he. "And, do you know, I don't much care if Honor does like Livy. I think you're a gra' deal prettier'n she is, any way."

And then, perhaps fearing he might say too much and too far commit himself, he bit a big chocolate in two and ran off to do his errand.

Then the young lady, already having formed one advantageous alliance this morning, went down the path to where Donald was at work, and talked to him so charmingly and seemed so pleased with his flowers that the old fellow, although at first anything but

gracious, ended by bestowing upon her several of his choicest blossoms and most genial smiles.

She did not linger here however. Her alert eye had discovered still another world to conquer a little farther on where Ruggles was washing one of the carriages in front of the stable. He had his coat off; and his head was bare, although the sun was already quite hot. Densie came up and stood watching him while he squirted some water upon one of the wheels.

"Good morning," said she at length. Silence was not her forte.

"Good morning," answered Ruggles, taking his eyes off his work only for an instant.

"Ar'n't you afraid of getting sunstruck, with your hat off?" asked she.

"That's all nonsense," said Ruggles shortly. Then, with a second pail of water he began sponging his wheel. "Why," he went on, "sun and air are *good* for the head. They're the best 'hair restoratives' in the world. I knew a man who went to California in 'forty-nine' perfectly bald, and whose hair, from his digging in a trench bare-headed, came out thick as ever."

Densie laughed heartily.

"It's a true story," insisted Ruggles. "At least,

they tell it so over in Golden. And it stands to reason, it's wearing *hats* that makes men bald. Who ever saw a bald-headed *Indian*? — or a woman either, hardly."

Densie laughed again, much amused. Then she continued, watching him curiously:

"Do you know," said she presently, "that you give me, somehow, the impression that I have seen you before? I thought of it last night, as we were driving over, but now that I see you with your hat off, it is stronger yet. Of course, I never *have* seen you before."

The last sentence was not uttered at all doubtfully. Ruggles smiled.

"I've lived in the West," said he, "for a very long while. You've never been out there, I suppose."

"It must be that you remind me of somebody. Who *can* it be? It is so provoking to be reminded of somebody you know in this way and yet, to save you, not being able to think who it is!"

Miss Densie paused, still searching her memory to recall the person whom Ruggles resembled. The latter all the while kept doggedly about his work, feeling that her eyes were upon him. It vexed as well as alarmed him that he should be subjected to

this ordeal, and he did not much care if he appeared even a little rude. So, when she went on a moment later, talking of something else, he scarcely troubled himself to reply at all; and before long, rather disgusted with what seemed to her his stupidity, Densie left him. It was no use talking to a young man who wouldn't even look at her. Besides, she had caught sight of a person whom she took to be Livingston Mauran, coming up the drive.

She went back and met him in front of the house, introducing herself with a distance and dignity which he readily imitated, but which neither of them kept up long, for when Honor came out a little later she found them seated on the steps together, talking and laughing away with the ease and volubility of old acquaintances.

"We have settled it all," Densie hastened to tell her, "about the Archery Club that you and I were talking of. Mr. Mauran came over in obedience to your message, and he has already given me a list of every young man and maiden who is eligible for the purpose. Now, dear, if you'll get us some paper, I'll write the notices at once. We are going to have them all meet here this afternoon—for a sort of preliminary meeting, you know, and to organize.

We'll want them to get their bows at once, so as to begin to practise."

And Honor, not a little bewildered by all this (for it was the first she had heard either of the Archery Club or of sending for Livy,) but well aware of Densie's decided talent for business, and quite submissive to her wishes, went into the house and got the paper; and notes were at once written to something less than twenty young people round about, requesting them to come together at Hollownook at half past two that afternoon for the purpose of forming an Archery Club.

"They ought to be sent out at once," urged Densie, "else the gentlemen will all be off somewhere else. We must have *them* anyway."

"Ruggles will take them out as soon as he has harnessed for us," said Honor. "I spoke to him quite a while ago."

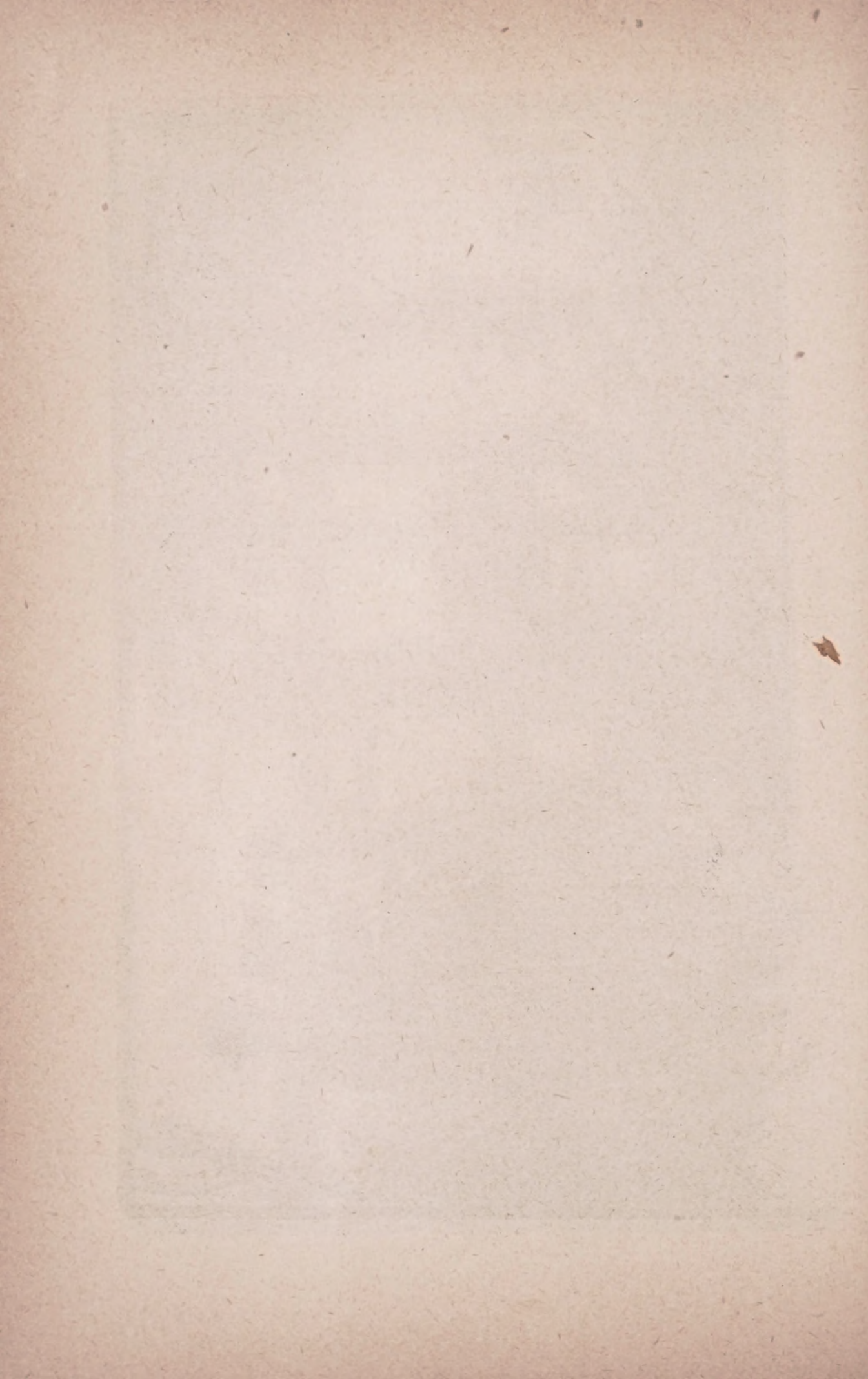
"Isn't Ruggles going to drive us?" asked Densie.

"No. He will take Douglas and carry the notes. We can drive Zampa very well without him." Zampa was the new horse.

Densie made a mouth at this; but Livingston highly approved.

"I'm glad," cried he, "that Honor has found out at *last* she can go somewhere without that fellow.





It's nothing but Ruggles, Ruggles, Ruggles, the whole time."

Ruggles at that moment drove up with the phaeton. He could hardly have heard anything of Livy's remark save the echo of his own name, but he apparently guessed at the rest.

"Zampa is rather uppish this morning, Miss Bright," said he as he jumped down. "You had better drive him yourself."

At which pointed suggestion Honor smiled in spite of herself, and Livy, not knowing what to say, said nothing.

Ruggles stood looking after them as they drove off, the notes Honor had given him in his hands. There was a little feeling of bitterness in his heart. Here were these people, really not a whit better than he was, going off to enjoy themselves, and he must stay behind and do a servant's work. His self-chosen position had more than once, of late, seemed irksome to him. However, he quickly threw the feeling off now. He had a future before him that he believed in, a future far grander and worthier than was likely, for instance, ever to come to Livingston Mauran. He went and saddled Douglas and did his errands; and then, hurrying back to his room, plunged head and ears again into the conjugation of a μ verb.

And before Honor came back from her ride, he had learned it by heart and was stretched upon his back fast asleep, dreaming, for aught I know, that he had grown up tall as a lightning-rod, and been "struck by presidential lightning."

In the afternoon the archery meeting took place. Almost everybody came who had been invited, and as they came up they were introduced to Miss Drew and, when necessary, to each other. No better opportunity is likely to occur of presenting them to the reader. Of Ramdon people there were the two Browning girls, Merrie Cutler, Waitie Pope; and, for gentlemen, Frank Plummer and Mr. Merrick, the school-teacher. These, with Honor and Livy, made eight Random people. Of the summer visitors, Sadie Wetherell and her brother Mort came first, bringing Allie Norcross, a friend of Sadie, and their cousin, young Rodman, a quiet, gentlemanly little fellow who did not have on his school uniform at all. Then from Littlefield's came the Harrimans, Miss Harriman and Miss Hope Harriman, and their brother Ray, with Sam Potter in their company. The latter was a tall, rather dandified young gentleman, with a very high collar and a very tightly buttoned coat, who never ventured away from home without his cane. There were two others—the Maxey girls,

who had sent their regrets, but would be on hand at the next meeting. All these, with Densie Drew and Angus (whom Densie had promised he should be allowed to join,) made up twenty, the number Miss Drew had declared to be most desirable for an Archery club.

CHAPTER XII.

MISS DREW UNEARTHS A MYSTERY.

NEXT morning a driving north-east rain-storm had set in. For the better part of three days and nights it rained steadily, making it impossible to get anywhere or do anything out of doors. Miss Densie Drew was almost beside herself. She grew quite white and thin with "nothing to do but stay in the house and mope." Livingston Mauran, Angus, and the coachman, each contributed what he could to her amusement. She played duets with Livy on the piano, notably "Chopsticks;" she at intervals devoted herself so assiduously to Master Angus that that young person was quite bewitched, and lay awake each night for at least fifteen minutes thinking about her; and between showers, at times when Ruggles was likely to be out of his room, she would, along with Angus, daintily pick her way to the stable



DENSIE DREW.

and amuse herself with what she called drawing him out. She had insisted upon it that Ruggles was bashful. He seemed afraid of looking at her and, although not disrespectful, answered her always almost shortly and with hesitation. All this however only made him the more interesting in her eyes ; and, she being determined that he *should* talk, he sometimes found it difficult to help himself.

“What’s the reason you don’t look at me when you answer?” she demanded of him at one time, as she stood watching him at work. “Is it necessary that you should keep your eyes on those wheels *all* the time while you are greasing them? One would think you had done something you were ashamed of, and were afraid to look people in the face.”

Ruggles muttered something in reply, without looking up however. He still had a fear lest Miss Drew might remember him if he gave her another opportunity to look him straight in the face. He need not, however. She had gotten quite used to him as he now appeared, and the ghost of the somebody-else of whom he reminded her had ceased to haunt her.

“And why don’t you *talk* more?” she went on, more provoked than ever. “I understand that you are studying Latin and Greek. Dear me ! What do you want to learn any more languages for, when you’ve

no use for the one you know already? And what are you always so sober for? Come now, *couldn't* you look up and smile, just this once—as a personal favor to me?”

There was no resisting this. Ruggles looked up at her, and not only smiled but laughed. Miss Densie clapped her hands in delight.

“Bravo!” cried she. “That is splendid! Now, if you could only say something funny, it would be complete. *Did* you ever make a joke?”

“Yes,” said Ruggles, “I did make one once in my life, I believe. Your speaking of languages reminded me of it.”

“Oh, do tell it me!” entreated Densie.

“Well,” said Ruggles. “Let me see. What’s the French for *thief*? Do you remember?”

“*Voleur*.” Densie rather prided herself on her French.

“Yes; that is it,” Ruggles nodded. “I knew it was something like the Latin word for to fly—*volare*. Indeed, that’s the point of the joke. In the French class, one day, I had a sentence with the word *voleur* in it. I don’t recollect what the rest of the sentence was; only I couldn’t think what *voleur* meant, to save me. But I thought that it must come from the same root as *volare* (there are so many French

words that come from Latin ones in that way), so I made a desperate guess and translated it *bird*. I knew in a minute I had made a blunder by the look of horror on the Professor's face. He was very sensitive to blunders, especially mine. 'Indeed,' said he. 'What kind of a bird, pray?' Just then, though, a fellow behind me whispered to me that the word meant *thief*, and so I answered up as quick as could be, '*Jail*-bird, sir.' That was my joke; and it always seemed to me that it was a pretty good one. At any rate, it brought down the house at the time."

Densie laughed, and declared that it was a capital joke. What he had said suggested something farther to her, however.

"So you have studied French?" said she thoughtfully. "It must have been at a private school. They don't teach French very often at the public schools. Was it?"

Ruggles all at once became entirely devoted to his work again, and made no answer.

"And it must have been before you went out West. They don't have private French classes out there, I take it. Honor tells me that you were born and brought up in Massachusetts, Ruggles. What part of Massachusetts was it?"

"It's about *time* that wheel was greased!" ob-

served Ruggles, with emphasis. "I wonder it didn't get stuck when you were out yesterday."

And that was all that Miss Densie was able to get out of him.

Of another morning during these same three days, Densie went out to the barn again, alone as it happened, not expecting to find Ruggles this time, for she had seen him go out the gates a little while before. Angus had told her confidentially that he and Ruggles had a "Nest" in the barn that no one knew of. It was up in the barn-cupola. Ruggles had floored it over and fitted it up, and it was real cosey. He (Angus) would take her up there some time, but she must not let Ruggles know. It was a secret. In fact, Angus had not meant to tell it even to her, but she had persuaded it out of him. And she was so much interested in his account of the "Nest" that she concluded to go and explore it for herself.

Going up the stable-stairs and passing Ruggles's door (which she coolly tried but found locked) she discovered that to reach the cupola it was necessary to climb up on the hay-mow. The latter was not very far above the second floor however, and she easily mounted to it by the upright ladder. Then she saw the Nest itself—or a square hole which evidently admitted to it—directly overhead, but quite

high above her and with no visible means of access. Upon looking around, however, she discovered a ladder of quite sufficient length lying on the hay; and this with great difficulty she managed to raise and place against the edge of the opening. Then cautiously and rather ungracefully—for climbing ladders is not a required study at the best boarding-schools—she mounted to the Nest.

She found the place all that Angus had described it. It was pleasant enough of itself, with windows on all its sides, and the wide lookout they gave over the fields and woods about. And Ruggles had shown decided taste and skill in fitting it up. The floor was neatly carpeted; and there were seats built entirely around the little enclosure. The windows were hung with white curtains, and overhead the roof was painted a light blue, giving a very pleasant effect. On one of the benches lay an open atlas which was evidently used as a drawing portfolio, as there were several pencil sketches lying in and about it. A carriage-blanket rolled up on the floor, looked as though it had served as a pillow.

Densie was quite charmed with the place. How cosy and pleasant it was, she thought to herself, and what a nice view it must afford on a pleasant day! Ugh! This horrid rain! And she looked out of the

window, noticing that it was raining again at this moment.

She had taken up one of the sketches and was looking at it, when all at once she heard the sound of voices below.

She sat and listened breathlessly. She recognized Angus's voice, and — yes, Ruggles was certainly there, too. Then there came a stamping and shouting on the stairs, and a rustling of the hay; and almost before Densie could collect her senses, she was aware that they had chased each other up on the hay-mow itself, and were at this moment directly beneath her. She remained perfectly motionless, listening in dismay. Ruggles and Angus — she could hear every word and movement now — were wrestling in the hay at the very foot of the ladder. She scarcely dared breathe lest she should betray herself. She certainly did not care to be caught in the Nest after what Angus had said. She must stay where she was, keeping perfectly quiet, until they went away again. And she hoped of all things that they would not think of coming up the ladder.

From the sound that came up (Densie did not dare peep through the opening) Ruggles was apparently lying on his back, and Angus was astride of him, stuffing hay into his eyes and ears. Presently

in their struggles, Angus seemed to have discovered something on Ruggles's wrist by reason of the latter's sleeve becoming rolled up.

"What's that on your wrist?" asked he, pausing in his fun and panting for breath. "I never saw it before."

There was a moment's silence, as though Ruggles might be pulling down and buttoning his sleeve again.

"Oh," said he carelessly, "that is nothing. One of the sailors marked it there when I was at sea."

"What does it stand for—'H. B.'?" asked Angus.

"You saw the letters, did you?" said Ruggles. "Trust *you* for keeping your eyes open. Well, it stands for Henry Bergh—and Hosea Bigelow and—hot biscuits—and lots of things. It is done with India ink. Sometimes it is called tattooing."

"Do sailors always have to have it done?"

"No; they don't have to. But most of 'em do do it. Some of them have ships and things marked on the backs of their hands, and even on their necks and faces. There's no sense in it though. It's a silly practice. Once done, it's done forever. There's no rubbing it out. I would give a good deal to rub mine out. I thought it was the nicest thing in the world when I had it done, though. I'm glad it's no bigger and is up where it doesn't show."

"Let me see it again," said Angus.

"No; I'm not fond of showing it. Indeed, I'd rather you wouldn't say anything to anybody about it—that you have seen it or the letters. Do you understand?"

"Yes," said Angus, "I understand."

"Upon your honor as a gentleman?"

"Upon my honor as a gentleman," declared Angus. And when the boy said that it meant as much for him as it would for a far older person. His aunt Honor had taught him what personal honor was.

Ruggles, catching sight of the ladder raised to the Nest, turned the conversation.

"Didn't I tell you not to leave that ladder up?" said he a trifle sternly.

"I didn't leave it up," said Angus.

"It must have been you. Nobody save you and I ever comes up here. I want you to always take it down. I don't care for other people to find out about the Nest. We will have one place where they can't follow us or find us."

Then with a single motion of his hand, Ruggles sent Angus tumbling into the corner, and getting up went and took away the ladder, and laid it down where Densie had found it.

Miss Densie heard rather than saw all this. She was in a trap now without a doubt. While she sat trying to think what she had best do, Ruggles spoke again, asking Angus where he was going. The latter seemed to have started down from the mow, and answered that he was going to the house for something to eat.

When Angus had gone all was silent for a moment; and then Ruggles appeared to have taken the pitchfork, and was heard pitching hay down into the mangers. Miss Drew remained motionless in the cupola. She was getting tired of doing so however. What should she do? She ventured stealthily to look through the opening now, and saw that without the ladder she could not possibly escape. But she could not get the ladder herself. Help from somebody below was absolutely necessary to her; and to call for help was to betray herself. Not that it was such a terrible thing to have been in the Nest. If she had announced her presence in the first place, it would not have been so very dreadful. But now, having remained quiet and overheard what Ruggles and Angus had said, she somehow felt as though she would wish more than ever to get away unobserved. She had heard distinctly what had been said about the letters on Ruggles's wrist; and although she did

not guess at their real meaning, she had not been deceived either, by the way Ruggles had passed it off.

She was beginning already to have a theory of her own about her friend's coachman.

She waited a moment longer in great trouble as to the best course to pursue. Then she made up her mind that there was no help for it, and that she must make herself known. She of course could not stay there.

Ruggles was still pitching down the hay, and just now he had been singing to himself as he worked, a scrap of Spanish love-song that he had picked up down in Sante Fé. His voice was not particularly musical, a fact of which he himself was perfectly well aware; and he would hardly have thought of displaying its qualities had he known of the presence of another.

Densie, although not generally lacking in assurance, was a little diffident now in raising her voice. With a sudden summoning of all her courage, she at length sought to make herself heard.

"Ruggles," she called out rather faintly, "Mr. Ruggles!"

Ruggles, at that moment turning away from the

mangers and throwing down his fork, was singing louder than ever. He did not notice her call.

“Dientes de nacar,
Labios de rosa,
Manos preciosa
Pequeño pie,”

he sang, repeating the first verse of the song because he could not think of the second.

“Ruggles! *Ruggles!*” she called again, raising her voice.

This time he heard her and looked up in amazement.

“Won’t you please put the ladder up?” she said sweetly. “I want to come down.”

Without a word, he went and got the ladder and raised it to the opening.

“Wait a moment,” said he. “I’ll come up and help you.”

Then he came slowly up the ladder, both still keeping silent, until he reached the top. She wondered what he was thinking as he came up.

“You’re quite a polyglot,” she said, as he stopped at last before her. “That song was neither French, Latin nor Greek, I believe.”

"No," Ruggles responded briefly. "It was Spanish. Now, if you please."

He put out his hand to help her, and then, one instant, drew it back.

"I don't know how you came here," he said. "But the existence of this place is one of our secrets — Angus's and mine. If I help you down, you must promise that you won't tell anybody else of it."

"Oh, I promise," cried Densie with alacrity. "I — I sort of stumbled upon it."

"And," Ruggles went on, "there are some other things —" He spoke slowly as though not sure that he had best speak at all. "There are some other things of which I prefer you should say nothing."

Then, without waiting for any answer, he took her hand and began helping her down the ladder. And, arrived at its foot, she without delay hastened to go down from the mow by herself and hurried off to the house.

Densie thinking all this over later, felt sure she understood what Ruggles had meant by his last words, and she made up her mind to be silent concerning it. Nevertheless, woman that she was, she could not help saying to Honor, before they went to sleep that night, that she was sure there was some mystery about the coachman. It was her firm belief,



DENSIE'S DREAM.—HUGO DE BOIS-GIULBERT.

she declared, that at some time or other he had occupied a very different station in life, and that "Ruggles" was no more his real name than it was hers. And to herself she wondered with all her might what those mysterious letters, "H. B.," could stand for; and she promised herself quite positively that sooner or later she would find out. And when at last, tired of turning the problem over in her head, she fell asleep, she dreamed that Ruggles came riding up the carriage-path the next morning in a coal-black armor with a raven plume and his visor down; and that on his shield in golden letters was inscribed this highly satisfactory name: "*Hugo de Bois-Guilbert.*"

CHAPTER XIII.

THE WITCHERY OF ARCHERY.

THE first "meet" of the Random Archery Club did not take place until nearly a fortnight after the day first agreed upon. There had been some delay about getting the tackle and uniforms; and then it was found that considerable practice would be needed before most of the members could shoot at all. On the Monday of the second week following, however, the club came together at Hollownook at three o'clock in the afternoon. It was understood that after the shooting there would be an out-door tea, and that the party would remain for some sort of good time in the evening.

The back lawn, familiar before this with all the beauties of croquet and lawn-tennis, had never presented so attractive an appearance as it did this afternoon when at length all were assembled and the arch-

ery practice began. A pretty tent of red-and-white canvas had been pitched at one side ; and this, with the bright-colored seats standing back in the shadow of the trees, the targets, one at either end of the lawn, and the groups of archers themselves in their white-and-green uniforms, with bow and quiver, moving here and there—all this on its ground of dark-green grass, freshly cut for the occasion, made a very beautiful picture indeed.

At least so Ruggles thought as he looked back at it for a moment from the edge of the pine grove. Ruggles was not in the best of humor this afternoon. And this, not simply because, having worked hard all the morning at getting ready for the archery meeting, he must now step aside and let those who might be considered his betters have all the enjoyment. There may have been, naturally enough, a little bitterness in his heart on this account ; but there was something else on his mind just now which had far more to do with his ill-humor.

The fact was, Ruggles had an appointment a little later in the afternoon, down at the edge of the wood, near the pond ; and it was one that he did not feel at all at ease about.

It is necessary, for certain reasons, to explain just here to the reader that Ruggles had that morning met

an old, though by no means valued, acquaintance. Having occasion, early in the day, to go down to the store for something, in crossing the Green he had come upon a group of villagers gathered about a single individual who seemed to be addressing them; and drawing nearer, Ruggles suddenly perceived with surprise that he knew the speaker. It was a man who had once been in the same employ with himself in Colorado, but who, on account of a slight misunderstanding about some missing horses, had been obliged suddenly to decamp in order to preserve his valuable life. Ruggles was not particularly glad to see him now, but it was not his way to turn his back upon a former acquaintance.

“ You can’t none of you be aware, gentlemen ” — Herron (that was his name) was saying as Ruggles came up — “ you cert’nly can’t have no addykate conception, gentlemen, of what a great traveller I have been. My perfesshun hes ben such as ter call me to ev’ry quarter of the known or unknown globe ; an’ I suppose there isn’t no parrylell of longytood thet I heven’t trod on, an’ no merridium thet I heven’t crossed. Why, where do you s’pose now thet I wos jest one year ago ter-day ? Jest make a guess, some ov yer.”

The orator paused and looked around upon his in-



AN OLD, THOUGH BY NO MEANS VALUED ACQUAINTANCE. 193



100 N. 100

terested audience with the air of one who puts a conundrum whose answer is not possible to be guessed. His surprise may perhaps be quite as well imagined as described when a good-natured voice on his right immediately responded :

“ Well, Herron, as near as I can recollect about it, a year ago to-day you were stowed away in a hollow-tree down in Maxwell’s Cañon, trying to keep out of the way of the vigilance committee.”

Herron looked quickly down and recognized our hero. So distinguished a traveller and man of the world was not to be taken aback, however, at even such an interruption. He pushed his way through the group to where Ruggles was, and grasped his hand.

“ Ef it ain’t Bright ! ” exclaimed he. “ May I never be made a major-gineral ef I ain’t glad ter see you. How did you come *here* ? ”

“ How did *you* come here ? ” returned Ruggles, laughing. And then he went on quickly to ask Herron this question and that about himself ; and as soon as he could he drew him out from the group and walked off with him alone. Herron had known him by his own name, Honor Bright ; and Ruggles was afraid that he might call him by it, and thus excite attention if overheard. The conversation that natu-

rally followed between them was of no particular consequence. They talked over the men and places they had known in common for some little time. Finally, Ruggles inquired where the other was bound, feeling the necessity of shaking him off as soon as possible. To his no small disgust Herron answered that he was not bound anywhere in particular. He did not know but he should stay about for a while. One did not fall in with an old friend every day. Besides, he had no money. If Bright could make him a loan, now — say of five or ten dollars — until he could get a draft that he was expecting his friend Colonel Stalker (who was in New York) would send him at Boston, he didn't know but he should like then to continue his travels at once.

Ruggles, knowing his companion well, decided what to do at once.

"I'll tell you what I'll do, Herron," said he. "I haven't any money with me, but I'll get it for you. "I'll meet you — down by the Pond, say — just back of those woods off yonder, sometime this afternoon — about four o'clock. I'll bring you fifteen dollars — that's every bit I have by me — on condition that you'll keep out of sight between now and then, and that after that you'll clear out and not come back."

"Ashamed of me, eh?" said Herron.

“Yes, put it that way if you like. What do you say?”

Herron, of course, finally said yes ; and, once more naming the time and place, and making him promise to keep himself out of the way until then, Ruggles left him.

The programme for the afternoon's shooting was not a very formal one. There was merely the general idea that everybody was to shoot at the target and that the person making the best shot would, for the present at least, be Master Bowman. There was no thought as yet of keeping any exact score. That would come by and by, as well as a great many other of the more elaborate rules and customs of the sport.

The targets had been placed some twenty-five yards apart, nearly facing each other. The archers were to be allowed a double round of six arrows each. The ladies, with Angus among them, were to stand just back of the line of one target and shoot across this twenty-five yards at the other. The gentlemen, being stronger and having heavier bows, were to shoot from a line some ten yards further back. These, Densie declared, were very fair distances for beginners.

They were to shoot alphabetically ; and when the time came to begin, Honor thus found herself obliged to lead off. She had practiced more or less for the last week under Densie's instruction, so that she could

handle her bow tolerably well ; but she certainly had not as yet arrived at any great degree of proficiency in its use. Her first arrow, discharged with quickness and firmness, appeared, as all eagerly watched its course, to be going straight to the Gold, but was found, in reality, to have just missed the target ; and, flying swiftly on beyond it, buried itself in the hedge. The shot was regarded as a very good one, however, and greeted with applause. Indeed, it turned out to be our heroine's best during this round, for not only did no other of her six arrows touch the target, but they all flew quite wide of it. Honor made room for the next person, a little flushed but quite ready to laugh at herself.

“At any rate,” said she, “if I haven't hit the target, I haven't shot any cows or anything. I read in the *Transcript* yesterday of a farmer whose cow came home all stuck full of arrows, where some archery club had been practicing in the neighborhood.”

It seemed, however, that Honor was not to be alone in failing to hit the target. Both the Browning girls and then Merrie Cutler followed her, and still no arrow had pierced even the outer rim of the canvas. The last young lady desperately shut her eyes when she made her final shot, and pulled her bow at a venture, thereby very nearly shooting Livy who had



A MEMBER OF THE ARCHERY CLUB,

walked over to the edge of the lawn for something.

"You had better look out, Mr. Livingston," cried she, "or *you'll* come back all stuck full of arrows."

Then came Densie Drew's turn ; and she took her place and fitted her arrow to the string with an air that plainly said that she meant to *do* something. Indeed, Densie had quite determined in her own mind that she would be Master Bowman. It was hardly probable there would be anybody among these Random people who could outshoot her.

"*Now* we shall see !" said Mort Wetherell rather provokingly, from close behind her. He did not really mean that Densie should hear ; but her quick ear caught the words and she turned and shot a glance at him that itself certainly went straight to its mark. Densie had heard of Mort Wetherell's faculty for making disagreeable speeches, and she had made up her mind to put him down. What he had said, however, coupled with her extreme desire to do well, made her a little nervous, so that only two of her arrows struck the target, and neither of these was inside the Black. She bit her lip in vexation as her last arrow flew quite wide of the mark.

"I am sure, Densie," said Honor, "you need not look so vexed. You are the only one that has hit the target at all so far."

"I don't know what is the matter with me," declared Densie. "I have shot miserably."

"I believe you," put in Mort bluntly. "We shall have earned our name if we don't do better than this. I never saw such poor shooting in all my life."

"No doubt we shall be treated to something very different when Mr. Wetherell's turn comes," remarked Densie witheringly. "No doubt *he* will eclipse us all."

"I certainly expect to shoot better than anything I have seen yet," responded Mort coolly. "If I don't, may my right hand forget that it is cunning."

"I thought they told me you were studying civil engineering, Mr. Wetherell," observed Densie. Mort was at the school of Technology.

"So I am," answered he in some surprise. "Why?"

"Nothing; only I think *uncivil* engineering might be more in your line."

Mort laughed. "You certainly scored a point there," said he good-humoredly. "Well, I didn't mean to be rude. I beg your pardon."

Then the shooting went on again; but for some time still without any good shots being made. Miss Harri- man put an arrow into the Inner White, and Sam Potter shot two of his through different places on the edge of the target. But with these exceptions all the arrows stopped short of or went beyond the mark. The

members began to insist that the target was too far off. Sadie Wetherell declared as she threw down her bow that *nobody* could hit it twice in succession.

"We'll see about that," said Mort, whose turn came immediately after his sister's, and who was indeed last on the list.

He discharged his six arrows in quick succession, the first passing just over the target, the second under it and the other four all lodging in it, one in the Outer White, one in the Black and two almost exactly in the same place in the Inner White. Mort evidently had shot before.

There was a great deal of applause, and everybody declared loudly that he would be the Master Bowman. That is, everybody save Densie. She elevated her chin a little, and insisted that nothing wonderful had been done as yet. And the trial was yet only half through.

Then they all went down to the other end of the field, and there was a great time hunting up the arrows. During the search Densie found herself for a moment at the lower end of the hedge alone with Mort Wetherell.

"Shan't I help you find your arrows?" asked he.

"Have you found all of your own?" inquired Densie.

"Oh, yes; only two of mine came by, you know."

Densie tossed her head.

"I really hope you will forgive me for shooting better than you did," said he laughing. "I really don't see how I could help it."

Densie did not laugh, however. She was a good deal of a spoiled child, and apt to be out of temper when things did not go to suit her. "I mean to shoot better next round," said she briefly.

And Mort, seeing that she took the matter so to heart, carelessly resolved that he at least would not stand in the way again of her making the best shot. He certainly had no ambition to be Master Bowman himself. He could not resist the temptation to return the thrust she had given him a little while before, however. And so, as he picked up and handed to her her last arrow, he remarked that he certainly hoped she would make the best score this time. "I think you would make a capital Master Bowman, Miss Drew," said he. "You have such a talent for — for *bossing*, you know."

The second round was rather more creditable to the club generally than the first had been. A great many more arrows found the target, and there were some really good shots. The interest, however, was centred in Densie and Mort, who were evidently con-

siderably more skilful than the rest. Densie shot much better than before; and there was a shout of applause when one of her arrows was seen to fix itself in the edge of the very Gold. It was altogether the best shot that had been made, and seemed likely to settle the question of leadership. The excitement became intense, therefore, and the applause was redoubled when the last of Mort's arrows, more of chance probably than intention, for it was apparently discharged with entire carelessness, flying swiftly to the mark, planted itself in the edge of the Gold directly opposite Densie's arrow, in a position otherwise so exactly the same that it was impossible to say that either was nearer the centre. It was declared at once that they two must shoot another round to decide the matter, a course to which Mort appeared to be lazily disinclined, but to which he finally was obliged to agree, proposing, however, that the six shots of each be counted this time at their regular score value, so much for each color hit. Densie readily assented to this; and after a short delay the shooting was once more resumed, this time, however, it being confined, of course, to Miss Drew and Mr. Wetherell.

Densie was now entirely cool and self-possessed, and did her very best. Her finest single shot was

not quite so good as that she had made before; but she lodged three arrows in the Red, and not either of the other three missed the target entirely. Her total score was twenty-eight, and she felt more than satisfied with it as she finished.

And then came Mort's turn again. He seemed to shoot much more carefully and deliberately than heretofore. His first arrow lodged in the Inner White, his second in the Black, and his third, and fourth, one in the Outer White and one in the Red. Everybody clapped their hands and marvelled. He had sent an arrow into each color except the Gold. And the enthusiasm of the company may be imagined when, an instant later, his fifth arrow went straight to the Gold itself, lodging within an inch of the centre. It was a splendid shot, and one that would have made him Master Bowman but for the change in counting which he himself had suggested.

All was still again as Mort made ready with his last arrow. And everybody watched with deepest interest as he stood there almost a minute with his bow raised and bent. All that while, however, he was not, as was supposed, taking careful aim. He was counting up his score and calculating what he should do. Nine and Seven and Five and Three and One. That made him Twenty-five. Any shot inside the



ANOTHER MEMBER.

Black would give him a larger score than Densie, and this he did not want. If he made the Black itself, the two scores would be a tie, and this he did not want either. So he took careful aim at last at the Outer White and let go the arrow.

It was no easy thing to do, however, and he had aimed a little wide lest he should possibly make the Black after all. And the result was that his arrow just missed the target entirely, and flying on with the speed of light, penetrated the hedge beyond.

The next instant there arose from over behind this hedge such a howling and lamentation that everybody stood in dismay. The arrow had evidently found a living mark of some sort,

CHAPTER XIV.

A CHANCE SHOT.

A moment later a human figure appeared at an opening in the hedge a short distance below where the arrow had entered. This figure advanced with a characterless sort of gait toward the still wondering group of archers, one hand holding his hat and the other ostentatiously pressing to his head a maroon-colored silk handkerchief. He groaned as if in great pain as he came forward. He seemed to be of that class altogether common in New England, and generally recognizable at a glance — the class of “tramps.” Plainly, this tramp had been shot in the head, and craved sympathy in his affliction. He was not a pleasant-looking person either as to his face or general appearance; and there was a little cry of feminine terror as he drew near.

“He can’t be very much hurt,” somebody said in

an undertone. "He makes too much fuss about it." And then the stranger was close upon them.

"W'at's the matter with me?" he began, repeating the words as though they were a question that had been asked. "I sh'd *think* yer would want ter know. Is honest men's lives ter be sacrificed in this way, thet they's ter be shot down with bown'-arrers wherever they goes?" Then he bowed his head and groaned again in great agony.

"Pooh!" uttered Mort Wetherell, standing forth as a sort of spokesman. "People who are killed don't generally make so much noise about it. I don't believe you're hurt much. Let's see." And he took a step forward.

But the man groaned again and drew back, conveying the idea that his hurt was too tender a matter even to be looked upon.

"All I asks is," said he, "that yer give me a dollar or two ter pay the doctor fur sewin' it up."

This Mort declined to do until he had seen the wound; whereupon the man began to bluster and threaten, muttering something about seeing a lawyer instead of a doctor.

Mort laughed contemptuously.

"It is we who will see a lawyer," retorted he, "if you are not careful. What right had you to be over

beyond that hedge there? Didn't you know that this is private property? And haven't you seen a poster in your travels telling you that people without visible means of support are liable to arrest?"

"Don't yer call *them* visible means of support?" demanded the man, holding out both hands. Then quickly he returned to his head again the one that held the handkerchief, but not before those standing by had seen that his injury was probably a very slight matter. "Besides," he went on, "I've a perfeshun of my own, I'd hev ye understan'. I'm a dealer in horses."

"Well," said Mort indifferently, "we haven't any horses here that we want dealt with. And we have had enough of this, I think. Here, take that, and be good enough to resume your travels." And he held out a quarter-dollar.

The stranger took the coin without thanks, carefully feeling of its edge to make sure that it was not a twenty-cent piece, and then looking around upon the rest of the company as though expecting further contributions. He was not encouraged, and, grumbling to himself, he presently turned and walked off again, both hands in his pockets. Instead of going away as he had come, however, he went down toward the Nook, and was almost immediately lost sight of among the trees.



The archery part of the day's programme being now completed and it being already quite late, Honor requested her friends to make themselves at home among the grounds while she retired to superintend the setting of some tables under the trees near by. Densie offered to assist her, but Honor would not hear of it. The Master Bowman, she said, must remain with the club.

So, for something less than an hour, the young people occupied themselves in one way and another, some still keeping up the shooting, some sitting about in the shade or going in and out the tent, and some strolling about the place.

Among the last-named were Miss Drew and Mr. Wetherell. Densie, having secured her wish, was now disposed to be quite gracious to her rival ; and she had at once taken possession of him and indicated her desire to walk about a little before tea. They were both good talkers, and their conversation was interesting and lively. It would, however, be impossible to reproduce it here. One little incident which occurred to them must, however, be briefly recounted.

They had lingered for some time in the Nook ; but others having by and by found their way hither, Densie had led her companion down one of the

long corridors of pines until they were quite deep in the woods. All at once they heard voices and halted. The sound came from what must be an open space near by, separated from them by a thickness of foliage.

"Hush! It's the tramp!" whispered Densie, holding up her hand and looking startled.

They stood still and listened breathlessly. The unmistakable tones of their late visitor, the "tramp," could be distinctly heard, although they did not catch the words. Then he stopped speaking, and another voice began to reply—a voice that Densie also instantly recognized. It was that of Ruggles. She put her finger to her lips, and drawing nearer to the leaves, they found an open place and peered through. Ruggles and the tramp were standing there together, the latter facing themselves. The former had some money in his hands—bank-notes, as they could see plainly—which he at this moment held out to his companion.

"All right, then," he was saying. "Here is the money. You'll stand by the bargain?"

"Of course." The tramp took the bills and nodded. "I wouldn't go back on an old frien' and pardner. Spesh'ly one as done me the good turn you did once, thet time down in the kenyon."



Me an the Boy 'll be miles from here to-morrow mornin'."

"Good-by, then." Ruggles seemed anxious for the other to go.

"*Addeeos*," returned the tramp. "Ye hevn't forgot yer Mexikin, I hope. *Tengy oostay agrydarbles enswaynyos*. Sweet dreams to ye."

Then he moved as if to go ; and Densie and her companion, fearing they might be caught listening, turned and hurried back toward the Nook.

"What could they have been talking about?" asked Densie presently, as they came back to where the hammock was hung. "And why should he have been giving that person money?"

"Oh, I don't know," returned Mort carelessly. "Probably it was some relation of his, or something, whom he was ashamed of ; and he gave him five dollars to get rid of him."

Which explanation Densie herself received as quite a probable one ; and Ruggles sank in her estimation many, many degrees. Doubtless, after all, he was an extremely common person, and the letters on his wrist stood for some such horrid name as Hezekiah Briggs or Hiram Brown. Densie's dainty lip curled as she thought of it, and instantly began to talk about something else ; and in two minutes had

forgotten the very existence of so insignificant an individual as Thomas Ruggles.

Of the out-door tea, which occupied something more than an hour's time, and which was all that Honor, in her quality of hostess, could have wished it to be, nothing can now be said. And it will be necessary as hurriedly to pass over the time that followed until twilight came on and the house by and by was lighted up.

About eight o'clock the party, with the exception of a very few, had gathered in-doors and was scattered about through the different rooms, variously occupied, after the manner of a company that has not yet made up its mind just how it will pass the evening. In the music-room Densie had seated herself at the piano and was carelessly playing a waltz, perhaps by way of suggesting what would be *her* pleasure as to the evening's occupation. She desisted in a moment, however, as, glancing over her shoulder, she saw through the open door that Mort Wetherell was, so to speak, carrying on an opposition to her in the library and attracting quite an audience to himself. Mort was going through a special *rôle* of his, which he could act to perfection, and for which he was invariably called upon of society-nights at college. His somewhat extraordinary preparations

at once drew Densie from her seat at the piano.

Mort had arranged Sam Potter before him with an umbrella held straight up over his shoulder, so as to look as much as possible like a big bass-viol ; and then he himself, with Sam's cane to represent a bow, was acting the part of a musician — making with his mouth all sorts of appropriate sounds as he appeared to be stringing and tuning his ridiculous-looking instrument ; rasping across it continually to try it, and all the while, in the funniest manner imaginable, talking away to his audience with an inimitable German accent and with all of a German's volubility and animation. Densie herself could not help laughing as she saw him ; though she presently thought it necessary to assume an air of severe disapproval, as she went through the library and out into the hall in quest of Honor.

Fifteen minutes later it was discovered that Honor and Densie were missing ; and then, as inquiry began to be made, they reappeared together, coming down the hall stairs.

“Ladies and gentlemen,” Honor announced, halting on the stairs and speaking so as to be generally heard, “we have decided upon a plan for the evening's entertainment. We are going to extemporize a

sheet-and-pillow-case masquerade. I trust that will be agreeable to everybody !”

This communication being received with universal favor, Honor went on to say that rooms had been prepared above, where sheets and pillow-cases would be found in plenty, and the company were requested to go up at once and get themselves ready. ‘The gentlemen’s room was to the right, and the ladies’ to the left.

Whereupon, eager and delighted, they all hastened up-stairs, leaving the rooms below, for the moment, in a state of quiet once more. While they were gone, Honor occupied the time in making some re-arrangement of the apartments. There would be dancing, of course, so Donald and Ruggles were sent for to come and move the piano nearer the hall door, so it could be better heard in the parlors. And some tables and chairs were taken out altogether. Before this was quite accomplished, some of the maskers had already come down again, though it was quite impossible to distinguish them, enveloped, as they were, from head to foot. One of these had just reached the hall as Ruggles, having finished what he had come for, was going out. He was passing quickly, hat in hand, when this unknown person laid a hand on his shoulder.

"Aren't you going to stay?" was asked him, the speaker dropping her voice (it was a lady) to a whisper, so as not to betray herself. "It will be lots of fun. Why don't you get you a sheet?"

Ruggles halted a single moment, not having the remotest idea who this could be, and hardly comprehending the words. Then, nettled at the thought that he was being trifled with, he turned roughly on without a word of answer, and went out the door.

The incident lingered in our hero's mind, however, as unpleasant things are like to do, for a long while after that, and aggravated a certain feeling of soreness and discontent that had troubled him all the day. To see and hear these young people enjoying themselves so, and himself to be shut out from it all — this was getting to be harder and harder for poor Ruggles, in spite of his good sense and his dreams of a magnificent future.

A few minutes later and the company had all come down again, and the rooms at Hollownook were full of "tall and sheeted ghosts" moving here and there, laughing and talking with each other, and getting merrier and merrier as the spirit of the thing was more fully entered into.

Ruggles had gone at once to the stable, intending

to light his lamp and go to work. But at the foot of the stairs he halted a moment, undecided ; and then, turning back, he went and pushed open the door of the carriage-room and sat down in a camp-chair that was kept there. He was in no mood for study to-night, especially with all this noise about the place. From where he sat he could see, through the long piazza-windows streaming with light, the figures of the masqueraders as they moved about ; and the sound of their voices and their laughter, and presently the notes of the music as they began a dance, came across the lawn with an irritating distinctness through the still night. He was half-inclined to go down to the Nook and go to sleep in the hammock, or to take a walk down by the Pond perhaps. And with this last thought came a recollection of Herron and the incident of their meeting. Ruggles had no doubt that Herron had kept his promise and was at this moment half a dozen miles away. And now that he had gone, the lad felt a sort of genuine pity for his old acquaintance. Sitting there in the darkness, just within sound and sight of a scene of joy and gayety which he was quite shut out from entering, it was easy to have a kind of fellow-feeling for tramps and outcasts.

And so Ruggles fell into a gloomy reverie that

lasted a long time. He was aroused by and by by the approach along the drive of a figure in white, which he at once guessed to be that of Angus.

"Well, Angus," said he, "are you tired of it?"

"It's no fun!" answered Angus, in a tone of disgust. "Everybody knows me — just as *you* did. I'm so short." Then he began impatiently pulling off his disguise.

"*I* don't want it any more," he declared, throwing it down on the stable floor. "I know what *I'm* going to do. I'm going to get up in one of the trees and shoot beans at 'em with my bean-sapper."

And with this nefarious project in mind, Angus strode away as he had come, vowing dire vengeance on all the world, like a pirate in a story.

Ruggles sat and looked at the discarded sheet and pillow-case, turning over in his mind, at first indifferently, and then with growing interest, a notion that had come into his head. The words of the person he had met in the hall came back to him. Why should he not wrap himself up like the rest and go in among the company? Here was an opportunity to lay aside the coachman and go back, for an hour or two, at least, into the world to which he really belonged. The temptation all at once became very

great, and he was in a reckless mood. He took the sheet and wound it about him, and carefully enveloped his head and face in the pillow-case. Then he moved towards the house, making a slight detour, so as to approach from the front. There were many of the party walking about the grounds, and there was no likelihood of the new-comer being noticed.

CHAPTER XV.

SHEETS AND PILLOW-CASES.

AFTER meeting some half-dozen persons similarly attired, and being addressed by them exactly as one of themselves, Ruggles began to feel entire confidence in his disguise; and at the same time there sprang up in him — the reaction, probably, from the dissatisfaction he had felt with everything and everybody a little while before — a sort of exaltation of spirit, that made him ready now to venture anywhere, and enjoy his novel situation to the utmost.

In the grounds front of the house he met several of the company, most of them promenading in couples. Among these, as they passed by, he recognized at one time Livingston Mauran, who was walking slowly along with a lady on his arm, to whom, in his unmistakable drawl, he was elaborately quoting some bit of

blank verse about Troilus and Cressida, and a moonlight night. And not very far behind these came Densie Drew, also distinguishable by her voice, talking away to her companion, young Rodman, as briskly as a Trappist monk upon a talking-day. Ruggles halted a moment and looked after the latter couple. As he turned to move on again, he found himself face to face with a new individual, a lady, whom, with instant resolution, he accosted.

"Aren't you rather imprudent," asked he, by way of beginning, "to come out here into the dark all by yourself?"

The person addressed, ordinarily quite tall, drew herself up still higher. The words, though Ruggles had of course not intended it, had touched a sensitive spot. Miss Harriman — for it was the elder of the two Harriman girls — had found herself something of a wall-flower this evening, and had not enjoyed herself particularly. And she had been dwelling upon the fact rather bitterly as she came along the path.

"Thank you," said she, very stiffly. "I don't mind being alone at all." She did not pass on, however, and presently went on, in a much sweeter manner, to speak of the weather and the beauty of the night. The moon was now just rising above the trees. She



HONOR'S SHEET-AND-PILLOW-CASE PARTY.

thought it much more pleasant, she said, to walk about the grounds than to stay in-doors. Did he not agree with her?

But Ruggles, perceiving now who his companion was (he had seen her several times before this), rather regretted having stopped her. His reply to what she had said was not very enthusiastic; and although they stood talking politely together for some minutes, he was looking all the while for an opportunity to get away. This came almost immediately, and in a manner as satisfactory as he could have asked.

For just at this juncture Densie Drew and her escort were heard returning along the walk. The former seemed still to be carrying on most of the conversation. Ruggles and his new acquaintance could hear distinctly what she was saying as they stood in silence. Densie, it appeared, was begging young Rodman to give her one of the buttons from his uniform-coat, which he had not worn to the Archery meeting. She was making a collection, she said. She had a button given her by a West Point cadet, and a midshipman, and a young fellow in the Signal Service, and a student from St. John's School at Sing Sing, New York, and one from the Highland School at Worcester. And now she wanted a Che-

shire button too. Perhaps she should make a necklace of them when she had enough.

Then the four came together, and Densie halted, saying something at once that would include Miss Harri-man and Ruggles in the conversation. Truth to tell, she was a little tired of her present companion, and was seeking some excuse for dismissing him. And this desire was increased by the curiosity she presently began to feel as to Ruggles. The latter spoke in a low, even tone of voice, which, although it sounded familiar to her, she was quite unable to connect with any particular member of the company. Hardly a minute had passed before she had made up her mind to substitute him for young Rodman, in continuing her walk; and her quick wit at once suggested a method. She carelessly changed her position, so as to bring Ruggles where her late companion had been, and then, as though by a sudden impulse, she took his arm.

"Come, Mr. Rodman," said she, "we must not stand here. Let's go on to the house."

And before Ruggles could make any resistance, even had he been so disposed, she had started on, drawing him with her and talking away in such rapid fashion as to leave him no chance to speak until they were some distance from the other two.

Ruggles, however, took the matter very quietly.

"Pray don't consider it necessary to address me as Mr. Rodman any longer," he said coolly, as soon as he got a chance.

"Dear me! I do believe I have made a mistake and taken the wrong gentleman," exclaimed Densie, with great show of surprise. She held him at arms' length. "It certainly isn't Mr. Rodman at all! How funny! Well, then, what shall I call you? I'm sure I haven't the faintest idea as to who you are." This last, at least, was quite true.

"Oh," replied Ruggles, "you may call me what you please, and I am quite at your service. Shall we go on to the house or stay out here?"

"I think we will go in, Mr. What-you-please. I want to get you into the light where I can see you. I'm fairly dying of curiosity."

"Ah," said Ruggles. "It must be a very unpleasant sort of death — dying of curiosity. If it is likely to prove fatal, I'll tell you my real name."

"Oh, no, indeed!" Densie tossed her head. "I don't really care in the least to know. If I did, I dare say I could easily guess. I presume I have talked with you several times before, this evening. That is the worst of these sheet-and-pillow-case affairs. People all look so much alike, that every time you

meet them you have to find out who they are all over again."

"I can assure you that you haven't found me out before, nor talked with me."

"I thought I had talked with everybody," said Densie. "That is, with all the gentlemen. But perhaps I took you for a lady. As Mort Wetherell says, one can't tell Fine from Superfine half the time when they're wrapped up in this way. I suppose I know your name, don't I?"

"Yes," answered Ruggles. "Yes; I've heard you speak it a dozen times."

"Were you introduced to me this afternoon?"

"No. In fact, I was never introduced to you." Ruggles, in the best of spirits now, and relying fully upon his disguise, relished keenly this playing with the facts of his peculiar position.

"*Never* introduced to me!" repeated Densie, with emphasis. "Then we will stop right where we are." And she suited the action to her words.

"Oh, pray don't!" entreated Ruggles.

"But I could not think of knowing anybody without an introduction," declared Densie.

"Come to think of it," remarked Ruggles, slowly, "I *have* been introduced to you. I had forgotten all about it." This was said purely in the interests of

truth. It had just this moment occurred to our hero that he had been once introduced to Densie, at a time when both were younger than they were now.

"Oh," said Densie. "If that is so —" And she took his arm again.

They went up the front steps together and into the door. Under the hall light Ruggles felt that his companion was scanning him closely. But this did not trouble him. One does not fear recognition with one's head wrapped up in a pillow-case so as to disguise even the voice. He noticed at this moment that most of the company had the advantage of him in that they wore masks made of cloth or handkerchiefs. If Angus had had any such arrangement, Ruggles had overlooked it when he appropriated the equipment. He did not mind, however. He had pinned the pillow-case about his face so that he could see out very well, and without being seen. The dancing had ceased some time before, and the maskers were sitting about or promenading, many of them passing in and out. Densie led the way to a *tête-à-tête* that was unoccupied, and sat down.

"Now," said she, "the first thing you may do is to bring me some ice-cream."

Ruggles did not know exactly where he was to get any ice-cream for her; but he noticed that several of

the people about them were taking refreshments where they sat; and surmising that he would find them in the dining-room, he made his way thither. He found that he was right in this, the refreshments being placed there on the table under Elspeth's care, to be taken as desired.

"Now," again said Densie, as he returned with the ice-cream, "sit down here beside me and talk. If there is anything I dislike, it is to have all the talking to do. If you will tell me who all the gentlemen are — so far as you know them — I will tell you who all the ladies are."

"Very well," assented Ruggles. "Only you must begin."

"Well, to begin with myself, I am Densie Drew."

"Yes," said Ruggles, "I knew that by your — by your talking so much."

"I think I shall know *you* hereafter by your rudeness."

"Who is that yonder, reigning over such a host of admirers?"

"That is Miss Pope."

"Ah, a case of Papal supremacy!"

"How bright you are!"

"I came of a Bright family." The pun was not

exactly a new one, but Ruggles enjoyed it immensely, all by himself.

“And that lady in the door-way with the palm-leaf fan, that is Honor.”

“Is that Miss Bright?” asked Ruggles.

“Yes. And I don’t know who it is she is talking with. But that girl beyond her, whispering to Mr. Merrick, is Edith Browning. Of course they are always together. Engaged people are always so. I intend to be married some day myself, but I *never* shall be engaged. I think it is horrid. Those three girls talking so fast and making such a noise in the hall? One is Mort Wetherell’s sister, and one is Hope Harriman. The other I’m sure I don’t know. That is all the ladies there are in sight at this moment. Now tell me about the gentlemen. And begin, as I did, with yourself. Indeed, I know all the rest already.”

“And I don’t know any of the rest,” said Ruggles.

“Well, who are *you*?”

“I decline to answer. “I’m not obliged to give evidence to criminate myself.”

“Do you mean that you won’t tell me?”

“Of course I sha’n’t. It’s not fair. You must find out.”

Densie arose and put her empty saucer on a table close by. Then she turned back to him.

"I ask you once more to tell me your name. I will give you half a minute to answer. If you don't tell me in that time, I will go off and leave you, and I'll never speak to you again so long as I live, whoever you are!"

"But—" began Ruggles, in a tone of remonstrance.

Densie stood in rigid silence, looking straight at the wall above his head, as if there were a clock there.

"I'll tell you what I *will* do," uttered Ruggles, really fearing she would keep her word. "I'll tell you who I am *not*."

Densie still gazed steadfastly at her invisible clock, answering not a word.

"You may name over all the names you can think of, and if you name mine I promise to answer to it."

Densie made him a formal bow. "The half-minute is up," said she. "Good evening—or rather, good-by forever."

And turning on her heel, she walked off towards the person she had pointed out as Honor.

Miss Drew, however, was hardly as angry as she pretended, and she was far from having relinquished all interest in her late companion. She stopped and spoke to Honor a moment, calling her attention to Ruggles, and asking her to try and find out who he

was. He must be somebody whom she herself had not met, she said. But of course Honor would know him.

The result of this was that when Ruggles, tired of sitting there alone, had risen and gone out into the hall, Honor followed him and detained him.

"I'm afraid you are not having a very good time," she said. "I saw you sitting all alone by yourself. I would like every one to enjoy himself." Honor made no attempt to hide her own identity. Indeed, she could not very well do so and perform the part of hostess. "Can I do anything for you?"

"Yes," said Ruggles, without hesitation. "You can walk with me. Will you go out-doors somewhere? It is very oppressive here."

"I don't quite like to leave the house," said Honor. "Can't we sit down here?"

"Of course, if you prefer it." And Ruggles would have led the way back to the *tête-à-tête*.

"Or," Honor continued, "I'll make an agreement. You do something for me first, and then I will walk out with you."

"All right," responded Ruggles. "What is it?"

"I've a fan here. You see it is all written over. Almost everybody here to-night has written a couplet on it. Could you make a rhyme, do you think?"

"I don't know but I might," said Ruggles. "That is, if I was to be paid for it by your walking with me."

"If you write as well as you talk, you will do very well, I fancy. Come in here to the library table."

They went in, and Ruggles, sitting down, was handed a pen.

"If you will look these over," Honor continued, "you will see just what it is that I want. You must write a couplet which shall somehow bring in your own name."

"Ah," said Ruggles, "that is what you want, is it? You and Miss Drew show a most commendable zeal in the pursuit of knowledge."

He began looking over the verses on the fan. Almost all of the company, as Honor had said, had written a rhyme on the different segments of it, some of them seeming to be very good poetry and some of them exceedingly bad. One or two of the couplets, written by individuals whom he might be said to know, Ruggles slowly read aloud. They will serve as samples to the reader.

"Ah," murmured Ruggles, turning the fan and coming upon Densie Drew's signature. "This is Miss Drew's, is it?"

“‘To write a line upon your fan?
Of course I’ll do for you
What I would do for no one else.
Yours truly, Densie Drew.’

“I am sure, that is very good poetry indeed. And here is Mr. Mauran’s :

“‘’Tis not so easy, Miss, to write
One’s name upon a fan,
Especially a name so long
As Livingston Mauran.’”

Then Ruggles sat and thought a moment, drumming with the handle of the fan upon the table. At length, with an air of resolution, he dipped his pen in the ink, and then wrote in a quick running hand a verse for himself. Then he handed the fan to Honor and rose from his seat.

Honor took the fan and read the lines aloud.

“Alas, poor me ! What can I do,
When asked by Honor Bright,
To write my name upon her fan,
But take the pen and write?”

“What do you mean?” asked she, looking up at him puzzled and rather disappointed. “Where is your name?”

"It is there," answered Ruggles, doggedly.

Honor shook her head. "I don't understand," said she. "Is it *Wright*? Is that your name?"

"I can't say any more. I can only assure you upon my word that I've written my name there. If you can't see it, it's not my fault."

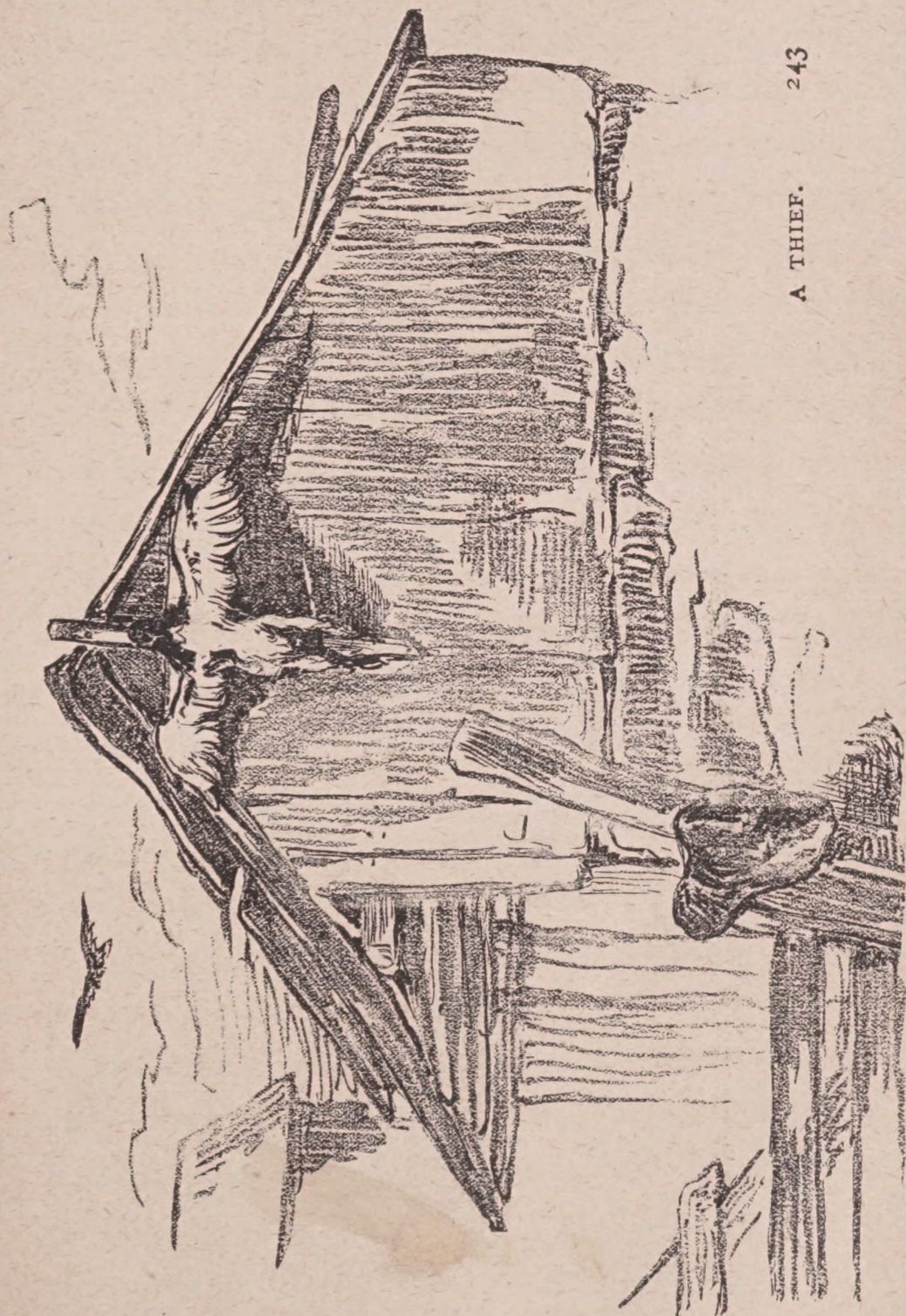
"No," said Honor, "I can't see it at all. Is it some kind of an anagram—like 'buried cities,' you know?"

"I don't think it fair to ask me any questions," declared Ruggles. "I've performed my part of the bargain. Now will you fulfil yours?"

"It seems to me you haven't *quite* done what I asked," said Honor. "And so I shan't quite do as I said, either. I'll go and sit on the piazza with you, if that will do."

"Very well," Ruggles agreed; and they stepped out through the window and sat down by themselves at one end of the front piazza.

They sat for a long time and talked together; but it would hardly be well to give here a detailed account of a conversation which, however pleasant and interesting to the speakers themselves, would, I fear, somewhat tire the reader. Ruggles certainly had not enjoyed another such half-hour for many a day. He did most of the talking himself, Honor listening.



And although at first what was said was light and humorous, rather than serious, it was not long before the young fellow quite forgot the peculiar circumstances of the occasion, and fell to talking earnestly and soberly, at times waxing fairly eloquent in advancing some of his pet theories and ideas, or alluding to certain grand plans which he cherished. As for Honor, she listened with growing interest, and found herself at the end of half an hour as keenly curious as Densie herself had been to know who this unknown person was.

They were still sitting and talking thus when the last-named young lady by and by came upon them.

"Ah, here you are, Honor," said she. "I believe this gentleman is the person I have promised never to speak to again so long as I live. Won't you ask him to go into the house after my fan? It is a red one. He might look on the piano."

"Oh, certainly," said Ruggles himself, rising. "I'll get it." And he went inside.

The errand had been only a heartless ruse of Densie's, however, to furnish an opportunity for inquiring if Honor had been able to penetrate the disguise of the Unknown. But Honor could tell her nothing, save to show her the fan.

"I do believe that he is some stranger who has

come in," the latter declared, after trying in vain to make anything of our hero's rhyme. "Do you know, I've stood at the door and counted the gentlemen as they went in and out, and I have counted the full number that ought to be here, without including him at all. Who *do* you suppose he is? At any rate, we shall know when we unmask. Isn't it about time?"

"Yes," said Honor. "We will go in at once and I will give the signal. Our unknown friend does not seem to find your fan."

"No; and I don't think he will," exclaimed Densie, holding up the article itself, which she had held in her hand all the while.

Then they went in together, arm-in-arm.

Ruggles' failure to return had nothing to do with the fan, however. Not finding it where Densie had directed him, he had suspected some ruse, and troubled himself no more about it. But he had met at the door of the music-room another person, who came near causing him trouble. This was no other than Angus.

"Well," cried the latter. "If that ain't my sheet, then I'm a lawyer! I know it by the smooch. Who is it? — Ruggles?"

Ruggles had raised his hand warningly, and Angus had lowered his voice towards the last. And luckily,

no third party was near enough to overhear. Ruggles at once drew him aside to the back part of the hall, and hastened to extract from him a solemn promise not to betray him, which Angus, who was his devoted friend, readily gave. It was precisely at this instant that Mort Wetherell, standing at the foot of the hall stairs with Honor beside him, raised his voice and called, "Attention, company!"

"You all remember the arrangement as to unmasking," shouted he. "The time was to be left indefinite, and a signal to be given suddenly, each one present to then disclose himself exactly where he happened to be. I now give that signal;" and he struck his hands loudly together.

With the majority of the company, as they now quickly discarded their snowy disguises, we have nothing just now to do. But as to the fate of one of them, who, as may well be imagined, was quite unprepared for this sudden unmasking, the reader will naturally feel a little anxious.

"I guess you're in for it *now*!" whispered Angus to Ruggles, as Mort concluded.

But Ruggles was a person of action; and he had not the slightest intention of having his escapade discovered. He seized Angus by the collar.

"Here," said he, "show me out the back way,

quick !” And he moved toward the dining-room.

“No,” gasped Angus. “Mother’s in there. ’Twon’t do. There’s a back stairway, though. Come along !”

He turned and led the way up a somewhat dark stairway, Ruggles following, and they came out at the rear end of the upper hall.



A DETECTIVE.

“You’ll have to hide yourself in my room for a little,” said Angus. He led the way in. “There ! Get out that window on to the piazza-roof. That’ll be better. And when there’s nobody round, you can drop off.”

So Ruggles quickly tore off his borrowed plumage, and in another moment he had disappeared outside the window. ●

CHAPTER XVI.

WHAT HAS BECOME OF ANGUS?

THE next morning, while breakfast was in progress, there was sudden consternation and alarm at Hollownook. Angus having failed to respond to several extra bells, and finally to his father's stern call from the bottom of the back stairway, the latter had gone quickly up to the boy's door. To his surprise he found it locked, and there was no answer to his knock. Raising his voice, he made sure that Angus could not be within; and then, more provoked than alarmed, he went back down-stairs. It was probably one of Angus' stupid tricks.

Mrs. Murdoch, however, became immediately uneasy. She got up and went to the dining-room window, and thus discovered that a ladder, which was usually kept in the stable, had been left standing against the piazza, close by Angus' window. Mr.

Murdoch went out and ascended by this ladder to the roof above, and entered the room by the open window. A moment later he came out by the door and hurried down-stairs. He held a soiled, maroon-colored silk handkerchief in one hand and a piece of sponge in the other; and there was now a look of decided alarm on his face. Both Honor and Densie, the instant their eyes fell upon the handkerchief, recognized it as the one they had seen the afternoon before in the hands of the stranger who had been struck by the chance arrow. And then, when it was found that there was a slight, but unmistakable odor of chloroform about the sponge, and a careful search about the house and grounds established the fact that Angus was certainly missing, what had at first suggested itself to the minds of all like a nameless fear, became an almost certain fact — that the house had been entered during the night, *and that Angus had been stolen!* As this distressing conclusion seemed at length to be inevitable, Mrs. Murdoch became almost wild with grief, and the other members of the family, although much more calm than she, were scarcely less affected.

Mr. Murdoch immediately hurried off to the barn, and, while Ruggles at his bidding was saddling Black Douglas, he briefly explained the matter to him and

told him what he wanted. Then, as our hero put his foot in the stirrup, Mr. Murdoch handed him a telegram which he had hastily scrawled, together with a roll of bills.

"You may need the money," said he. "Go to the station at once with the dispatch. It is for a detective. See if you can find out anything there, and then ride on as fast as you can to East Chester and Littleton. If you get any clew come back at once. If you don't, go around by Elyotville and the river. They must have gone through some of those places. I shall harness Zamp and go down to Squire Orton's. But I depend most upon you. If they once get fairly off with Angus, it's one chance in a thousand if we ever see him again. For the sake of the boy's mother, you'll do all you can, my lad. I'll never forget it. Come, now, off with you!" He grasped Ruggles' hand as he finished, and his voice choked.

"I think you can trust me," was all Ruggles said in reply. Indeed, he had hardly spoken a word — only listened and thought — while Mr. Murdoch had been talking. He felt even more certain than the other that Herron was at the bottom of the matter, and he had been on the point of saying so when the tramp was mentioned; but a second thought prompted him to hold his tongue. It did not seem

to him necessary to mention his own connection with the suspected individual. But he thought to himself, as he rode out of the stable and down the drive, that he was the person to catch Herron, if anybody was ; and he made up his mind to do it.

Then Mr. Murdoch drove over to Squire Orton's ; and after a brief consultation, a constable was despatched in a direction opposite to that taken by Ruggles, telegrams were written and sent to various points round about, and some bills were prepared containing descriptions of Angus and his supposed abductor and offering a reward for the capture of either. Then the distressed father returned home to comfort his wife as well as he could and wait for the coming of the officer. He had telegraphed to headquarters for a skilled detective to come out by the next train, and he felt that nothing more could be done until the latter's arrival.

The detective came at eleven o'clock. A carriage had been at the train to bring him over. He was a short, square-shouldered man, plainly dressed. He had small, questioning eyes, a shrewd, suspicious mouth ; and indeed, all over his face one seemed to see written, "No trust here." His training and experience were probably not such as to have made

him over-confident of the goodness of human nature. The name upon his card was Clewer.

Mr. Clewer was a man of few words. He listened in silence, save for a brief question or two, to Mr. Murdoch's account of the affair, and then asked to be shown up-stairs.

Angus' room was exactly as Mr. Murdoch had found it at breakfast-time, except that the sponge and handkerchief had been picked up from the floor. These Mr. Clewer had already seen. The bed was tumbled, showing it had been slept in, and the bed-clothing lay partially on the floor. There was a sheet and pillow-case a little way off, evidently, as was explained to the visitor, that worn by Angus the night before. The door of a clothes-press stood open and also a drawer of the bureau. The detective stood in the middle of the room for a full minute, his quick glance travelling all about him. Nothing escaped his eye. He saw a pin on the carpet at his feet and stooped to pick it up, putting it in his coat. He espied a small, black object, which proved to be a button, lying near one of the bed-castors; and this also he picked up, quickly slipping it into his vest pocket. He went presently and examined the clothing hung in the press, which act led to the discovery that two suits of Angus' clothes had been

taken, as also some articles of underwear from the bureau. Then he stepped out through the window upon the piazza roof. There was nothing noticeable there save the ladder, as to which he simply inquired where it was usually kept.

Then the two went down again to the library; and sitting down by the table, the visitor, without yet expressing any opinion, proceeded to put very rapidly question after question to Mr. Murdoch, of many of which the latter gentleman was quite unable to see in any way the bearing upon the case in hand. Then, after he seemed thus to have asked all the questions he could possibly think of, Mr. Clewer returned finally to a subject that he had already inquired very particularly about—that is, as to the present members of the family. He wanted to know all about the servants, too, asking many questions as to the character and history of each, especially Ruggles.

“Can I see this coachman—Ruggles, did you call him?” he asked at length. “Ah! you said you had sent him off to make inquiries. And you have a sister living with you. Can I see her?”

So Honor was sent for and came down at once leaving Densie with Mrs. Murdoch.

“I wanted to ask you about this handkerchief,” Mr. Clewer began at once, motioning toward the

article named, as it lay on the table beside him.

"You thought you had seen it before?"

"Yes," answered Honor. "The tramp—if he was a tramp—had it in his hand yesterday."

"Please tell me about this tramp—just what happened and how he looked."

So Honor described quite fully what had taken place the afternoon before.

"And you say this person had this handkerchief in his hand and was holding it to his head?"

"Yes."

"How do you know it is the same handkerchief?"

"I know it from the color and the border, and—well I am quite *sure* it is the same."

"But there is no blood on it. You say he was holding it over his wound."

"Yes; but nobody believed that he was wounded at all. He only wanted to get some money. I think you may be certain it is the same handkerchief. My friend and myself both recognized it instantly when Mr. Murdoch brought it down this morning. I think you may trust a woman's eyes in such matters." And Honor smiled faintly.

The detective smiled also. "I think I can, too," said he. "And I have little doubt that this handkerchief belongs to the tramp. We must try and restore

it to him. You do not know of his having been seen about the place — this tramp — either before or since ? ”

Honor did not know that he had.

“ Did he go back the way he had come ? ”

“ No : he went down towards the Nook.” And she explained to Mr. Clewer what the Nook was.

“ And he was not seen by any one after that ? ”

“ Not so far as I know,” Honor answered. And then, after an instant, she added musingly, “ unless Ruggles saw him.”

“ Ruggles ? That is the coachman. You think he may have seen this stranger later ? ”

“ Why, no — that is, I don’t know. I saw Ruggles go down toward the Nook a little while before ; and he may have met him.”

The detective was silent a moment.

“ This Ruggles is a very good coachman, I believe ? ” he presently resumed.

“ Yes : he seems to understand horses perfectly.”

“ And a good servant in every respect ? ”

“ Oh, yes. I haven’t a particle of fault to find with him, unless — ” Honor hesitated.

“ Unless ? ” — Mr. Clewer followed up closely.

“ Why, he sometimes seems to feel a little above his business. And when I have tried to show him

his place, he has been a little sullen. I have hardly known what to make of him lately. He is very much changed from what he was when he first came here. He seems moody and discontented, and never speaks unless I speak to him first."

"Ah!" said the detective. "Thank you. I may want to ask you something more later in the day. And now can I see this young lady, your friend, who is staying with you?"

Densie, thus summoned, did not come down for some minutes. She always kept gentlemen waiting, on principle. Besides, her crimps had to be combed out, even though she cared nothing particularly about this detective. Indeed, she declared, in a voice quite loud enough to be heard by the subject of her remarks, that she had no doubt he was *horrid*.

Mr. Clewer did not get impatient, however. He had enough to occupy his mind while he was waiting. And, indeed, when at last she did come in, he seemed hardly to notice her, sitting in deep thought for a long minute thereafter—a circumstance that only confirmed Miss Densie in her high opinion of him. He looked up at her at last, however.

"Miss True, I believe?" he asked quietly.

"Miss *Drew*, if you please," responded Densie, with great dignity.

"I beg pardon. I misunderstood the name. Miss Drew, I am told you think this handkerchief is the one the tramp had in his hands yesterday."

"I don't think so — I *know* so," responded Densie.

"How do you know it?"

"I *saw* him with it, of course."

"But how do you *know* you saw him with it?" persisted the detective.

"How do I know that I see *you*?" demanded Densie, rather unanswerably.

"But I and a pocket-handkerchief are very different things."

"Indeed!"

"However," Mr. Clewer went on, "I dare say you are right as to its being the same. But about this stranger. Do you think you would know him if you saw him again?"

"Yes, I do," returned Densie, positively.

"What makes you think so?"

"Because I saw him again, and knew him at once."

"Ah! Tell me about it, please."

"That is, I *suppose* I saw him again. I'm not quite sure *now*. If I am not to believe my eyes about the handkerchief, I suppose they're not to be trusted when I think I see a *man*."

"I'll trust them in *that* matter any time," put in

Mr. Murdoch, with a half-hearted attempt at humor.

"You saw the tramp again, did you?" Mr. Clewer went on quickly. "Tell me about it."

Whereupon Densie described the meeting she and Mort Wetherell had witnessed in the woods back of the Nook, just before tea the previous night. So many things had been going on since then that the incident had not occurred to her until this moment. And indeed she had not thought it of special consequence. She told the story now in so thoughtless and voluble a way that her listener was constantly obliged to keep her to the point; and she was so careless of details that, in questioning her sharply, he more than once made her flatly contradict herself. When at last he had succeeded in getting at the pure facts of the case (which possibly seemed to him of much more importance than they did to Densie) the young lady had worked herself into a state of the most intense wrath and indignation. When she had finished, Mr. Clewer sat for some moments in complete silence again, seemingly quite forgetful of the other two.

Densie endured this state of things as long as she could. Then she arose.

"Well, sir," said she, highly exasperated, "have you done with me?"

Mr. Clewer looked up at her as though he had never seen her before.

"May I ask if you have finished your inquisition?"

Mr. Clewer smiled.

"Oh, yes; you may go now, if you like. I hope, Miss Drew, you will never be called upon to testify in a court of justice."

"And why not, pray?" inquired Densie.

"Because you would be about as poor a witness as I can imagine," returned Mr. Clewer coolly. And then, as though she had already gone, he dropped his eyes and went back to his thoughts again.

Mr. Murdoch sat and watched his companion in silence after Densie had retired. At length he went and laid his hand on the detective's shoulder.

"Well, Mr. Clewer," said he, "what do you make of it? Is there any light so far?"

"Oh, yes; a great deal of light."

"Can you find me my boy?" Mr. Murdoch was not a man to show feeling, but there was real woe in the voice that asked the question.

"Oh, there is not a doubt of that," was the assuring answer. "Why, what do you suppose *they* want of the boy? It is only a question of how much they can make you pay to get him back. You will hear from them before long. And meanwhile, you may be

sure they will take the best possible care of him. But what I want is to get him back for *nothing*, and the kidnappers along with him. There really is nothing to worry about, Mr. Murdoch. Go tell your wife that I say so. But we can do nothing further now until we hear from the men we sent out this morning. Now, if you will excuse me, I would like some dinner."

"You shall have it at once," was the answer. "I have ordered it at two to-day."

While Mr. Murdoch and his guest were at table (none of the ladies came down) the constable returned, announcing that no trace of the fugitives was to be found along any of the roads or at the towns which he had driven through. Mr. Murdoch was greatly disappointed; but he still comforted himself with the hope that Ruggles would bring a different story.

After dinner, Mr. Clewer, who seemed to take the whole matter very easily, lighted a cigar and strolled out into the grounds. Amid the flower-beds he presently came upon Donald Campbell. He paused beside him, and stood watching the old man work for some moments, without saying a word, puffing away at his cigar with his hands in his pockets. When at length he thought he had fairly taken Donald's measure, he ventured to address him.

"You keep it looking pretty nice around here," he began. "Do you attend to it all yourself?"

"An' wha did ye think did it beside?" growled Donald, not looking up at all.

"I didn't know but there was some other man about the place."

A contemptuous grunt was all the answer Donald made to this.

"I thought perhaps you might have a boy or something to help you — an assistant, you know."

"There is sic an ane aboot the place; but as for assestance, he's nae mair gude than a pair o' bagpipes in a deif an' dumb asylum. He's fit for nae thing but to ride aboot the country."

"You mean the coachman," said the detective. "I understand Miss Bright thinks a great deal of him."

The only reply Donald vouchsafed to this was a kind of snort, as he dug his spade deep down into the ground.

"And he certainly is a very honest, manly young fellow," persisted Mr. Clewer.

The old man suddenly flung down his spade, and, straightening up, held out both his bony fists, half clenched, before him, and shook them with great vehemence.



OLD DONALD.

“Honest?” repeated he, his cracked voice pitched in the key of indignant wrath. “Honest an’ manly, do ye say? I wadna trust him oot o’ sicht an eenstant. Wha kens onything about him? — a heep-ocreetical, leein sunk thet was pickit oop in the road withoot a shillin’. Hoots! He canna deceive Donald Cawmill as he does the leddies. I wadna wonner if he had a clo’en fit in ilk ane o’ his shune. An he’ll show it, soon or late, as sure as there’s a parsonal de’il.”

And Donald, who had never forgiven Ruggles for coming to Hollownook, and who thoroughly believed all this that he had been saying, having thus worked himself into a boiling passion, fell to loosening the earth about one of his shrubs again; and not another word could Mr. Clewer get out of him.

The detective presently wandered around to the stable, where he lingered all by himself for some time, examining its appointments inside and out with great apparent interest. Then he walked down through the village, stopping at the store to write and mail a letter or two, and making various inquiries about the village.

It was after five when he reappeared at Hollownook, coming slowly up to the front piazza where Mr. Murdoch was sitting by himself. And while the two

were talking together, the gallop of a horse was heard, and the next moment Ruggles came riding in.

As they halted at the steps, both horse and rider plainly gave evidence of having done a hard day's work. But a single glance at Ruggles' face showed that it had been of no avail. And his story, quickly told, seemed to take away all hope of immediately finding the lost child. He had been to all the points Mr. Murdoch had named, and to several others, making constant inquiries and notifying the authorities. But not a single trace of the fugitives had he found.

While Ruggles was speaking, the detective had sat there in his chair, watching him closely. As the lad moved on, Mr. Murdoch turned to him and said :

"I don't see a particle of hope, so far, Mr. Clewer. What am I to do? Here is a whole day passed already, and we are no nearer catching the rascals than we were this morning."

"On the contrary," said the detective very quietly, "we are much nearer catching them than we were this morning. The young man who has just left us was in Angus' room last night ; he helped kidnap the boy, and he probably knows pretty nearly where he is at this moment."

CHAPTER XXVII.

CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE.

LATER in the evening—just at twilight indeed, and the lamps were lighted in the house—Donald Campbell brought word to Ruggles that he was wanted in the library. As quickly as he could, therefore, he finished the bed he was making for Douglas, of whom he was specially careful after the hard day's ride, and obeyed the summons.

He found in the library quite a little group gathered. Both the young ladies were there, Honor in an easy-chair, with a sacque-pattern on her lap, which she had been embroidering for Densie (although she could have had little heart for work just now), and Densie herself seated on a hassock at her feet. Mr. Murdoch was walking up and down the room with a restlessness not at all usual with him; and the detective was again sitting by the table. The simple "good-

evening" which Honor alone vouchsafed him hardly served to break a sort of chilling silence that filled the room as Ruggles entered, and which he could not help but feel, though he did not comprehend it.

The young man stood respectfully, hat in hand, until Mr. Murdoch bade him be seated.

"Mr. Clewer wants to ask you a question or two," said he.

"Yes," said Mr. Clewer, at once taking charge of the conversation. "There are several things I should like you to explain to me if you can; and you may possibly have some information that will be useful. You are Mr. Murdoch's coachman?"

"Yes," answered Ruggles. "Or Miss Bright's. I take care of the horses and do most of the driving."

"You have a room in the stable—and sleep there?"

"Yes, sir."

"You slept there last night?"

"Yes."

"Did you hear any noise of any sort during the night?"

"No, sir; not that I remember."

"Are you a good sleeper?"

"Well, yes; although I am easily awakened."

"Would it be possible, do you think, to roll back



RUGGLES ACCUSED.



the carriage-room door and close it again without awakening you?"

"I don't know. Perhaps so."

"Are you aware that the door squeaks a good deal?"

"I am aware that it did squeak a good deal until I oiled it, a little while ago."

"Ah!" Mr. Clewer seemed to have a habit — of which he must have been quite unconscious — of saying "Ah!" whenever anything struck him as specially interesting or satisfactory. "You oiled it a little while ago, then? How long ago, let me ask."

"About sixty minutes ago, I should say," Ruggles answered, smiling. He was quite willing to be exact, if that was what was wanted.

Mr. Clewer paused and dropped his eyes a single moment, as one might who was writing down a point: only he had neither pencil nor paper.

"Mr. Ruggles," he began again, "have you any theory about this business? What do you suppose has become of Angus?"

"I suppose he has been stolen — kidnapped."

"Precisely. And if he has been kidnapped, then somebody must have kidnapped him. Have you any idea who that somebody may have been?"

"I have the same idea that I supposed everybody else had — that the person who was seen around here

yesterday, and whose handkerchief was found in Angus' room—that *he* had something to do with it. Indeed, I've no doubt of it. He is quite capable of it."

"What makes you think he is quite capable of it? Do you know him?"

"Anybody might see it in his face."

"And when have you seen his face? You were not on the lawn, I believe, when he appeared there?"

"No," said Ruggles, rather slowly, "I was not."

"And yet you have seen him?"

"Yes." Ruggles answered promptly this time. He would have preferred that the fact of his previous acquaintance with Herron should not come out; but, after all, it mattered little. The latter was not likely to turn up again, to betray our hero's real position. "Yes," said he, "I saw him yesterday morning. I knew him awhile ago, out West. His reputation was none of the best. And if he would steal horses, why, I think very likely he would steal children."

This statement did not seem to occasion anybody present particular surprise. The detective had doubtless learned the fact of Ruggles' previous acquaintance with the stranger in his inquiries about the village; and probably it had been talked over before

Ruggles came in. Mr. Clewer did not dwell upon it now.

"Did you see this person at any other time than this?" he went on.

Ruggles hesitated. He had no idea that anybody knew of his second meeting with Herron; and he saw at once that any acknowledgment of it would lead to an inquiry as to what passed between them, and so again the matter of his real name and position would be involved. Mr. Clewer pushed him closely, however.

"You were seen to go down through the Nook about three o'clock," said he. "And since the tramp, a little later, went off in the same direction, it was thought you might possibly have met him."

"Yes," said Ruggles decidedly. "I did meet him." He had no thought of lying about the matter.

"Did you speak to him?" pursued the questioner.

"Yes."

"Do you remember what was said?"

"Yes."

"Be good enough to tell us what it was."

Ruggles again took a single moment to think.

"Excuse me," he then said, "I would rather not. I have told you that I knew this man before. What

passed between us grew out of that fact, and concerned myself alone. I would prefer to say nothing about it."

Mr. Murdoch, who all the while had not ceased pacing up and down the room, halted abruptly now and turned toward the speaker with a look of impatient surprise. And there was a little whispering and murmur between Densie and Honor. Mr. Clewer alone was unmoved as ever.

"Never mind," said he. "It does not matter."

Then he again sat and looked down in silence for some little time — long enough to have written out quite a paragraph with his imaginary pen upon his imaginary paper.

"There is one thing more," he began again presently. "Are you in the habit of going into Angus' room?"

"No, sir."

"Have you ever been there at all?"

"Yes, I have."

"Have you ever been there more than once?"

"No, sir." The answer was not instantly given.

"Was that once within the last twenty-four hours? Was it *last night*?"

Once more for a moment our hero had nothing to say. If he confessed to having been in Angus' room

the night before, he would have to give some explanation of the fact ; and he was by no means ready to acknowledge that he had donned a sheet and pillow-case and intruded among the guests the previous evening—a thing that of course he had not the least right to do, and which, as he had thought of it in soberer moments since, he had felt not a little ashamed of. And there was, naturally enough, something of confusion that might easily have been mistaken for guilt in his manner, as at length he replied :

“I—I would rather not say anything about it.”

Mr. Murdoch, who had been standing still, awaiting the issue of this last series of questions, uttered a decided exclamation as this answer was given ; and Densie and Honor both appeared astonished. Mr. Clewer, however, merely smiled.

“Very well,” he observed. “It makes little difference whether you say anything or not. Here is something that will answer for you—and quite unequivocally.”

He held up to view all at once a black gutta-percha button, such as is frequently worn with suits of yachting-cloth or flannel.

“I found it on the floor in Angus’ room,” he explained. “I am told that the room was swept yesterday morning, so that it must have been dropped

there since then. And I noticed as you drove up to-night" — he was still addressing himself to Ruggles — "that this matched those upon your coat, one of which seemed to be missing. Permit me to restore it to you."

Ruggles came forward and took the button.

"Thank you," said he, with perfect self-possession. "I noticed that it was gone as I was riding along this morning."

His manner was unaccountable, even to the detective, though it did not alter that gentleman's opinion in the least. The lad could not but understand by this time that he himself was suspected of complicity in the matter of Angus' abduction, and that the grounds for such suspicion were exceedingly strong. And yet he betrayed neither alarm nor confusion. Mr. Clewer was actually beginning to feel a sort of professional admiration for him.

"And have you nothing to say for yourself, Ruggles, in answer to all this?" burst out Mr. Murdoch, unable to control himself any longer. "Have you really been helping them to steal my boy?"

Ruggles looked up at him, and then around at them all, with an annoyed and indignant air.

"Am I actually to understand, then," asked he

distinctly, "that you believe me to have had anything to do with the matter?"

Mr. Murdoch opened his lips to reply, but the detective motioned him to keep silence.

"Excuse me," he said, "but I have not quite done. I must say, young man, that you do yourself credit. You can hardly be new at the business. You have the air of innocence itself. But it cannot avail you. You do not realize how complete and clear is the evidence against you. Sit down a moment and let us go over the case together. You shall see for yourself how it looks."

Ruggles went back to his chair without a word; and Mr. Clewer, pausing a moment, as if to arrange his facts, proceeded to recite them in a direct, concise sort of way, looking straight down into his lap all the while, as though reading now from his invisible paper.

"The evidence against you," he began, "is, of course, purely circumstantial; but it is of the strongest kind. I assume, to begin with, that the handkerchief there, found in Angus' bedroom this morning, is the same which was seen in the hands of this tramp yesterday afternoon, and that it connects *him* directly with the abduction.

"Now, as to yourself: the facts seem to be, briefly, these:

“*First* — This tramp, by your own admission, and on the testimony of at least half a dozen people in the village, who witnessed your meeting on the Green yesterday morning, is an old friend — or, at least, an old acquaintance — of yours. It certainly is a very strange coincidence if he has accidentally come here where you are without any communication with you. And on the other hand, if it was you who brought him here, it was very stupid in you (and it hardly seems like you) to have publicly met and recognized him as you did.

“*Secondly* — In addition to some private conversation which you had with this person at this time, you met him again (as you admit), and certain conversation (which you, as yet, neither admit nor deny, but which was overheard by two perfectly reliable persons) passed between you, of a most suspicious character, and quite unaccountable upon any supposition save that there was a plot between you to — as has since appeared — kidnap Mr. Murdoch’s child. You gave him some money ; there was a ‘bargain’ alluded to ; your companion was distinctly heard to say that he would be off with the boy to-night ; and something followed, spoken in a foreign language.

“*Thirdly* — The ladder by which the room was

reached was usually kept in the carriage-room of the stable, and is known to have been in its place last night. It could not have been taken from there without opening the big door, and that door could not have been opened without a noise such as can be heard all over the place (I tried it this afternoon), and such as must, it would seem, have awakened any one sleeping in the barn, as was the case with you. And yet you deny having heard it. You acknowledge, also, that to-night you took pains to oil the wheel of the door and stop its squeaking, a circumstance that may, of course, mean nothing at all, but that might, on the other hand, indicate that you had thought that the matter might come up later, and were wise enough to take care of it.

“*Fourthly* — Besides the handkerchief of the tramp and the sponge (which had been used, presumably, to chloroform the child), there was also found in the room a button which, it is altogether likely, was dropped there at the same time. This button is found to have formerly had its place upon your coat, and you say yourself that you did not miss it until this morning. It would seem to indicate, therefore, that you also (as well as your vagrant friend) had been in the room sometime during the night. And when you are questioned as to the

matter, you decline to give any explanation of it, and do not even deny having been in the room during the night.

“*Fifthly* — Taking all this together, I put with it the facts that of your past history and character, up to a month or more ago, nothing at all is known save that at some time during that history you have been more or less intimate with a person whom you yourself have insinuated to be a horse-thief, and that, aside from the question of money (for of course you and your friend look to getting some money ultimately as the condition of restoring the child), there seems to be in your case an additional motive, or at least an impulse, growing out of the fact that you are believed to have felt yourself somewhat ill-used in being expected to know and keep your place as a servant here, and that you of late have maintained constantly a sullenness and reserve which you did not show at first, and which, considering your evident talent for concealment, may indicate a feeling even deeper than appears.

“That, I believe, sums up the case. You must see that it is a very serious showing for you. Now is the time for you to answer Mr. Murdoch’s question, if you really have anything to say for yourself. Your explanations, so far, can hardly be said to have amounted to much.”

To understand Ruggles' conduct now, it will be necessary to bear in mind just what sort of a person he was, and all the circumstances of the case, which of course the reader knows far more about than any of those who were in the room with him.

Ruggles was not a person to be easily frightened or upset about anything; and in the present case, of course, he was entirely innocent. Yet, conscience-clear and fearless as he was, he might well have been alarmed at the formidable array of evidence brought against him, but for the simple fact that he knew perfectly well that he could, at any moment, if he chose, open his mouth and speak the word that would completely demolish that evidence. Nothing could in itself have been easier than to tell them outright who he really was, and explain in that connection his relations with the tramp and his visit to Angus' room.

Why, then, did he not do this?

One would think that the present circumstances might have impelled him to such a disclosure at last. And here comes in the peculiar notions and character of the youth. There was in him a vein of obstinacy and persistence that, not at all a bad thing of itself when properly controlled, now and then got the better of him. It was this that had taken him off to sea three years before. It was this that determined his conduct now.

Whatever had been his intention when he first came to Hollownook under an assumed name, there had later sprung up in him a notion — it may never have taken the shape of a definite purpose in his mind — that he might after all go away again without telling them who he was. He certainly had thought very seriously, and had been getting to think more and more, of actually leaving his name and fortune where he had come home to find it — with this young lady at Hollownook — and going back into the world to seek a name and fortune for himself on his own merits. Possibly *then* he might come back and tell his true story when there was thus more of it to tell. Indeed, I will not say there was not a background of boyish romance to all this extravagant dream. Perhaps he saw himself coming back by and by and laying his trophies down at the feet of this same young lady who had formerly felt so much above him. Ruggles was a genuine boy still, albeit a manly one.

And all at once he finds himself standing here in the library before this famous detective, and with such a network of circumstantial evidence thrown about him by that ingenious individual that it seems likely he will be obliged to disclose his real position in order to clear himself. And doubtless a more timid or a less obstinate young person would at once have

done so, then and there. But, strangely enough, upon Ruggles the present difficulty had an effect precisely opposite. It only served to fix and confirm this notion of keeping his identity to himself. He said to himself now, that whatever come of it he would never be *forced* into disclosing himself.

All of which must go to help the reader understand truly (as his hearers could not possibly do) the words in which Ruggles replied to the detective's final question.

"You asked me, a little while ago," he began, his manner cool and ironical, rather than excited, "if I had any theory as to this business. It is quite evident at least that you have a theory, and that you feel bound to establish it, whether the facts warrant it or not. You are not the only detective that has first picked out his criminal and then proceeded to fasten a crime upon him. You ask me what I have to say in answer to this evidence. I have simply to say that, in spite of it all, I know absolutely nothing (further than the rest of you know) about Angus' disappearance; and I am as innocent of any connection with it as Mr. Murdoch himself. I assure you, upon my honor as a *gentleman*" — he looked around him almost fiercely, as if he dared any one there at that moment to dispute his title to the name — "that

I could this moment explain every point you have made (except, perhaps, that as to the ladder, which is of no consequence whatever) to your entire satisfaction, if I chose. For reasons of my own, I do *not* choose. But, Mr. Murdoch, whatever you think or do as to *me*, do not, I beg of you, go on with the search on the assumption that I am guilty. 'This man Herron (the tramp) is undoubtedly at the bottom of the affair. He had a companion with him — a short, thick-set fellow. He was the 'Boy' alluded to in the wood. I will give you an exact description of them both. *They* must be found at once if you hope to get Angus back.'

Ruggles stopped speaking, and stood looking eagerly from Mr. Murdoch to the detective. He had for the moment, in his anxiety about Angus, quite forgotten himself.

Mr. Clewer regarded him with a quiet smile.

"We shall certainly do all that we can to find the boy, independently of your connection with the matter," said he. "But it will be better for you if you tell us all you know." He evidently did not believe at all in Ruggles' innocence.

Ruggles turned gravely to Mr. Murdoch.

"Do you believe me guilty too, sir?"

Mr. Murdoch looked at him with a troubled face.

"I confess I do not know what to think," said he. "Yet what else can I think but that you had something to do with it, unless you can explain these proofs."

"Then," said Ruggles proudly, "it is time I went away from here." And he turned to leave the room.

"No," spoke the detective quietly. "It is not time you went away from here." His tone was more significant than the words.

"Do you mean that I am to be arrested?" demanded Ruggles angrily. Yet what else could he have expected?

But Mr. Murdoch interfered.

"No, no," said he. "Not that. I don't believe he will run away. Give me your word, Ruggles, that you won't do that."

"I give you my word," said Ruggles grimly. And then he added with a tinge of bitterness, "I am too tired to-night to run very far or very fast."

Half way to the door he halted abruptly and looked towards Honor.

"I should like to ask Miss Bright if she believes all this of me, too."

But Honor either did not or would not hear him. She did not even look up from her work.

He waited just an instant to make sure of this ; and then, without another word, he went out.

The next morning, when Elspeth went to call him to his breakfast, he was nowhere to be found. In spite of his promise, he had left the place ; and he had taken Black Douglas with him.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

BY THE LIGHT OF THE MOON.

RUGGLES, after leaving the library, had gone straight to the barn, and after one more look at the horses had sought his room and turned in. He was really almost as anxious about Angus as anybody; but his anxiety did not keep him awake. He fell asleep almost as soon as his head touched the pillow; but, as often happens when the mind is taxed, no sooner had his body become partially rested than he found himself wide awake again, and thinking away at the problem of the child's recovery as hard as ever.

The clock in his room struck presently — a single, quick stroke — telling him the hour. The room was full of light from the moon, which must be now well up the sky. He tossed about restlessly for something like half an hour; and then, with a sudden

impulse, he got up and dressed himself, resolved to go down to the pond and take a plunge. Probably he would be able to sleep again after that.

Thorough believer as he was in the truth that in all affairs of life men are guided by an unseen and all-seeing Power, Ruggles might well have had his simple faith strengthened by an event which now took place. Arrived at the shore of the pond, he walked along to the right until he reached a stretch of sandy beach where he had often come before with his present object. He went down close to the water, and pulling off his coat threw it down beneath a tree that was there. As he did so his eye fell upon something that looked like a letter lying on the sand. He picked it up and saw that it was a postal-card; and the next instant his heart gave a leap, as by the full light of the moon he read the direction. It was addressed to "L. Stalker, Wooster, Mass." He connected it instantly with Herron, and he turned it over with almost trembling eagerness. There were only a few lines on it, straggling and illy written, without date or signature. But they told him volumes. What he read was this :

Got in hear wit the Sloop Fridy morn. Do it sundy nite if you can or mondy nite annyway. shall look for you Toosdy at furthest with the frate. The Sallie Northup at old Birth.



"GALLOPING AWAY."

There was not a particle of doubt in Ruggles' mind as to who had dropped this postal and to what it referred. It had been sent either to Herron or his companion (the name Stalker assured him of this) and the "frate" (freight) was Angus Murdoch. Indeed, just before this last word another had been carefully erased which, it was not difficult to guess, had been the word "boy." He turned it over again, and saw with a sort of glee that the postmark was perfectly readable. It was "Providence, R. I." The clue that he wanted was in his hands. He snatched up his coat again and started off with a rapid step, half walk, half run, towards the house.

He hurried up to his room, hastily added a collar and tie to his toilet, took a revolver from the table-drawer and put it in his pocket, and then ran downstairs again. In another minute he had saddled Black Douglas and was leading him out the door. He did not take him along the drive, but around by the shrubbery, across Donald's much-loved flower-beds, and thus quietly towards the road. He did not wish to be overheard. At the gates he halted an instant, struck by an after-thought. He had given his word not to run away. What was to be done? He wished that he had written a note to explain.

He felt in his pocket for a piece of paper, but he had nothing save the postal. And he would not go back now. The only thing to do was to write back or telegraph in the morning. And so, with a single quick spring, scarcely touching the stirrup with his foot, he was in the saddle and galloping away.

It was ten minutes of two by the town-clock as he rode by the meeting-house. It would not be day for two hours yet. But that did not matter. He knew his road perfectly well for fifteen miles or more ; and after that people would be stirring and he could inquire. He was going to M—— Junction, twenty-four miles away ; and he meant to make it in three hours. He had heard, he did not remember just how, that a freight train went through every morning at five. And it was this that he hoped to catch.

It seemed scarcely a minute before Random was fairly behind, and they were galloping along at a splendid pace, he and Douglas together, over the hard white road. The stone walls and the fences and the houses here and there on either side came and went like things that flew. Douglas was like his master. He had had a hard day's work of it yesterday and he had not had half the rest he ought ; but he could do without it. They both of them had nerve and endurance enough to last them till another

nightfall. The rider bent over and whispered his wild thoughts into the horse's ear. There was that ahead that was worth their best united efforts to secure. What were thieves and rascals and the sloop *Sallie Northup* against an honest man and an honest steed, with the blood tingling in all their veins, and hearts that beat as one! And Douglas threw out his head with an answering neigh, and his pace seemed to lengthen at every spring, as the ground flew like light from beneath his feet.

They came out before very long on the Turnpike road. There was a guide-board at the corner:

Random Centre, four and a half miles.

"Four miles and a half already! Think of that, old Black! Why, at this rate we shall have to sit down and wait for the train!" And presently, right there before them was a familiar place in the road. Ruggles remembered it well. It was there that he had come whistling up and found Honor and Livy and Black Douglas halted together in the road. Ah, old horse! *You* knew what you had stopped there for, didn't you? You were waiting for your *master*. And you'd have waited until Christmas if he had not come along. Ruggles laughed out merrily. And his voice went echoing off over the fields, and away, away into the glorious night.

And then he fell to thinking of Honor—Honor Bright. And a sudden cloud fell over his spirits. He saw her as she had sat there in her chair when he left the library—with not a word, not a look for him, believing him guilty, as they all did. He could have borne it from the rest of them, every one—every one but her. And yet he could not blame her. Why should she see the matter but as they did, when even this skilled detective was certain of his guilt? No, he did not blame her. It was not even bitterness that he felt towards her now. Only a sense of honest hurt and sorrow. Her good opinion would have been worth so much to him just then; as her distrust had been the hardest of all. Well, he must bear that too,—bear it until to-morrow or the day after. He was going to find Angus and send him back, and a letter with him. He himself was not going back at all. He had made up his mind to that, absolutely, as he had stood there in the library. And Honor Bright—the *other* Honor Bright—should have the name and the money to herself. After all, she was worthy of them, with all her faults. Why should she not think herself better than he? She *was* better, a hundred times.

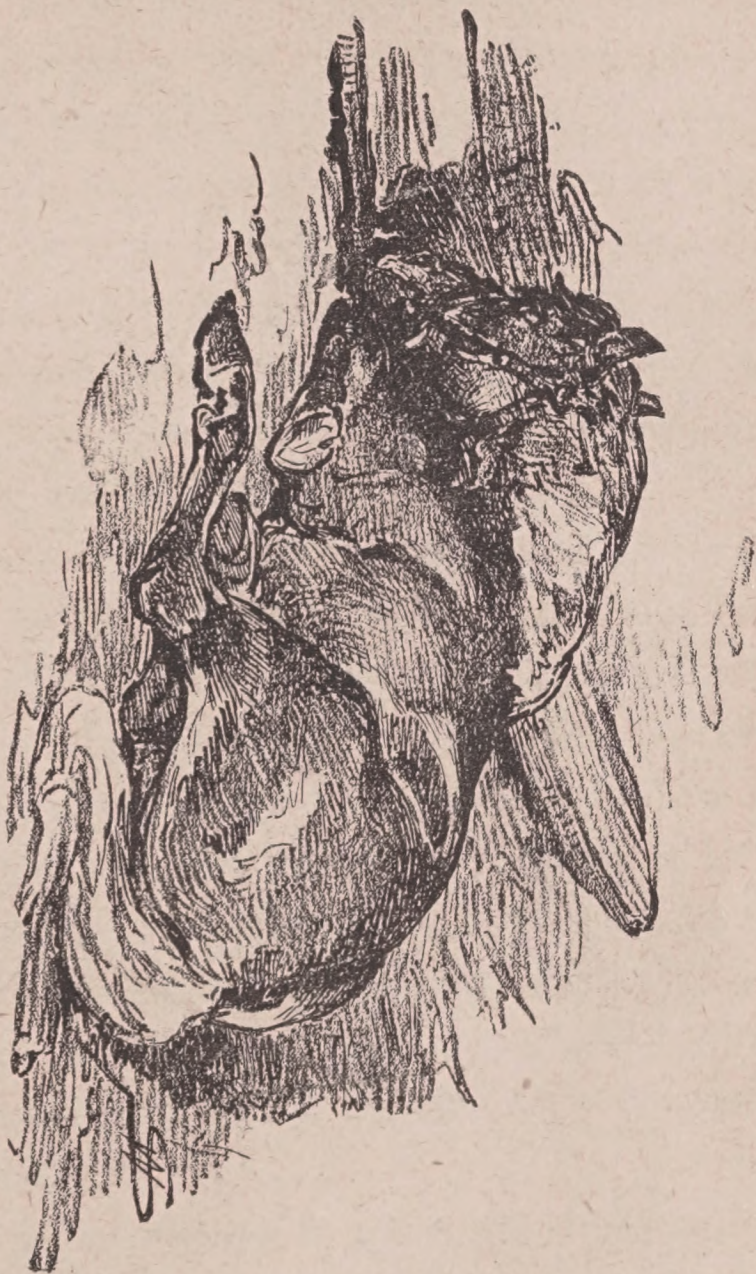
And so the miles and the minutes flew. W—— was right ahead now; and presently it was behind.

They were twelve miles on their way this minute, and it seemed scarcely an hour since they had started. Ruggles had no watch to tell him how he was getting on; but he did not care for any. He was doing his best, and it would have done him no good to know the time. They were in a hilly country now, and must go more slowly at times. And Douglas must have a chance to breathe now and then. Ruggles let him walk or gallop, as he would. The horse seemed to understand, and he was no shirker of his work. He meant to make the very best of himself, and almost always he would start up again of his own accord. They passed through two other towns; and then day broke and the east began to redden on the left. They pulled up at a watering-trough, and both refreshed themselves with a draught of cold water. Ruggles stopped at a house where a light was seen, to inquire about the way. And by and by — both horse and rider pretty well tired now — they came upon a guide-board again and read (almost by daylight now) that they were only half a dozen miles from their destination. Ruggles told his horse the welcome fact, and they went down a long hill before them at a telling pace. There was a rickety bridge at the foot, that shook and creaked as they passed over. And all at once, before they were well off from

it, Douglas stopped short with a shock and staggered and fell; and Ruggles flew headlong from his seat.

Our hero picked himself up quickly and ran back to his horse. There was a pain in his left arm and shoulder, but he hardly minded it at the moment. His only thought was of Douglas, who was lying there on his side panting heavily and not able to move. Ruggles ran and knelt down beside him. The horse looked up at him with great intelligent eyes, full of mute anguish. In the bridge close by was a jagged rent that told the story. And in another moment Ruggles knew fully what had happened, and he groaned aloud. The poor beast had broken both his fore-legs.

It was nothing to be ashamed of, surely, that the lad, kneeling there in the early morning by his crippled horse, should bend down then, and throwing his arms about the animal's neck fall to sobbing like a child. He knew that this was the end of the faithful steed. Douglas never would walk another step, and there was nothing to do but put him out of his misery. And it was not simply, or indeed at all, that by this unhappy accident the object of his journey was endangered. Ruggles had really loved this horse almost as one might love his human friend. A man and his beast could never have been more to



"HIS VERY LIFE HAD HE GIVEN."

each other than these two had been. Nothing could have been further from seeming weak or unreasonable than the sight of this young fellow, every inch a man already, bending over his fallen steed, talking in broken words to him and dropping hot tears upon his neck. Nothing could have been so inexpressibly sad and touching as the answering look in the eyes of the poor dumb beast that lay there suffering and uncomplaining. He had done his work nobly, and his very life had he given.

Ruggles rose up resolutely at length. There was, truly, but one thing to be done; and time was precious. He took his handkerchief and spread it tenderly over the horse's head. He could not bear the look of those mournful eyes now. Then he took his revolver, and putting it quickly to the prostrate head — he knew the proper place very well, for he had seen this done before — he fired once and twice. And then, in another moment, he knew that the thing was done. Black Douglas lay there dead, as he had fallen.

He made no attempt to move the body of the horse. There was no one near and there was no time. And since he could no longer ride, he must walk, or rather he must run. He started on at a swift, easy trot, but soon his shoulder began to pain

him sorely and he was obliged to go more slowly. Luckily, a village presently appeared, and a doctor's sign caught his eye as he entered it. He rang the bell, was at once admitted, learned that his shoulder was "out" and got it "put in" again, all in six or seven minutes; and then he hurried over to a livery stable, secured a horse and buggy and drove on to M——. He got there at quarter past five. And his train had gone!

There was nothing to be done but wait for a passenger train that came along some two hours later. Meanwhile he went and got his breakfast. After that he sat down in the station and fell asleep, by which he nearly missed the train, after all. Then an impatient ride of an hour brought him at last to Providence.

He went over to the river at once and walked along the wharves, happening to go down the east side first, scanning closely every one-masted craft to be seen, and constantly making inquiries. Away down by the Fox Point wharf, where the New York boats come in, he found a man who told him what he sought to know.

"The *Northup*? Sloop?" repeated he. "Yes, sir. She lay off in the stream yender when I knocked off work at six o'clock last night. She must a' got under way an' gone out in the night, or this mornin'

early, mebbe. She can't have got fur es yit. There haven't ben no wind ter speak of sence sunset last night."

"Tell me the quickest way I can get to Newport," said Ruggles.

CHAPTER XIX.

IN THE WEST PASSAGE.

OUR hero was told that there were three ways by which he could get to Newport. There was an early boat; but as it was discovered at that moment coming through Point Street Bridge, he could hardly take that. And the next boat would not go until some hours later. But one could reach Newport by train by way of Fall River. He would find out about that by going over to the Bristol depot, only a few steps away. And then there was the W—— route. At the depot mentioned, Ruggles learned that his best way would be the last named. And he was to leave by a Shore Line train at forty minutes past nine.

Of course the young man's idea in going to Newport was to get to the mouth of Narragansett Bay before the *Sallie Northup*. He felt that if he could do

that he should have her in a trap. As for stopping her—once let him get ahead of her and he would do it if he had to swim out to her and board her all by himself. Ruggles was a young person who, although not so dull as never to see any difficulties, was yet so determined and self-reliant that he rarely saw difficulties that were insurmountable. And, indeed, it is just such a quality that has enabled heroes to achieve the “impossible” a hundred times before now.

He took a horse-car that had been waiting for an in-coming train and went back to Market Square. By the clock at the horse-car depot he had, still, more than half an hour to spare. Around at the Post Office he got him a sheet of paper and a stamp and wrote a line to Mr. Murdoch, telling him briefly where he was and of the clew that he was following up. But at the last moment, he put it in his pocket instead of into the letter-box. After all, he would wait a few hours, until he got to Newport and found what would really come of his search. If he sent the letter now, he might have the detective down on him before night; and he had already had quite enough of the detective. He would manage the matter for himself; and as yet there was no real need of writing.

A little later he was on board the New York express and being whirled away southward. At W—— Junction there was a change of cars. A number of passengers, most of them of a superior class, got out with him and went across the platform, apparently bound for the same destination. Then a short run around to the left brought them in sight of the bright waters of the Bay; and passing presently through a pretty little town, they stopped at the wharf where a small boat was lying with steam up all ready to start.

It was a beautiful morning, calm and soft. And there is perhaps no more beautiful sail anywhere than that across Narragansett Bay at such a time. Ruggles went and sat down under the awning aft, meaning to enjoy it fully in spite of his anxiety and a sense of drowsiness which was now heavy upon him. The motion of the boat as they moved swiftly from the harbor, out past the Spindle and away toward the north end of Conanicut, made a current of air which was refreshing. A lady and gentleman came and sat down near him. There was a child with them, a boy, not unlike Angus in speech and ways. The lady by and by took a field-glass from her bag, and with it she and her companion scanned the scenery and objects all about them. Ruggles listened to their



THE FERRY.

conversation, willing to know more of the geography of the Bay. The child moved about here and there, interested in everybody and everything. He had looked at our hero once or twice as though he would like immensely to make his acquaintance. There was something about the latter that always drew children to him. And presently the boy came and climbed upon the seat beside him and made some remark about the water.

All at once the lady, who had been looking steadily for some moments at a small vessel some distance away, lowered the glasses and called to the child.

“Come here, Bertie, and look at this vessel. There is a little boy on board, I think. You can see him with the glass.”

Ruggles' heart gave a leap, and he looked instantly himself in the direction of the vessel. She was a small sloop, something like a mile distant, and a little to the southward of them, stretching over toward the western shore. The wind, what there was of it, was south and west, and she was apparently beating down through the West Passage. Could it be the *Sallie Northup*?

Master Bertie had taken the glass and was looking eagerly at the vessel; but he did not seem able to make out the boy. Ruggles, unable to restrain

himself longer, started forward and begged the use of the glasses a single moment. He thought he knew the vessel, he said. And the lady very politely bade the child give them to him.

Ruggles took them gratefully, and, trying them an instant, and readjusting them to suit his eyes, gazed for almost a minute at the sloop in the distance. He could not see any boy on her deck either, although he could plainly distinguish two men and a woman. He noticed, incidentally, too, that there was a big patch on the sloop's mainsail. He was about to return the glasses unsatisfied, when suddenly, right across the narrow circle of vision, there moved another figure, that of a boy, which, though it was impossible to be certain, at that distance, yet from something in the motions and outline, he felt sure must be Angus.

Scarcely thinking what he did, Ruggles handed back the glass to the boy, mumbling some thanks, and hurried away forward. He must see the captain at once. Here was the lost child almost in reach, and he must not be lost sight of again. But just abaft the beam below stairs, he stopped short, ready to laugh at himself. This was sheer nonsense, of course. The captain was not likely, from anything *he* could do or say, to stop his boat and go down

there after this vessel. Ruggles saw clearly that such a thing was out of the question. And he turned about and walked slowly aft again. After all, it would matter little. He should get to Newport long before the sloop could make Point Judith. And he knew her now, and was aware of her course. Success, sooner or later, in his undertaking seemed quite assured. But at this moment there was nothing for it but to wait. He went and sat down again, though in a different place, and watched the sloop closely, until Conanicut Island presently hid her from his sight. Then he went inside, and, lying down on a settee, with a life-preserver for a pillow, went fast asleep. When he awoke again the steamer was right in among a hundred yachts riding gracefully at their anchors, and they were almost at the wharf.

Ruggles had thought of going to the proper authorities and laying the whole matter before them. But he had finally rejected this plan. To follow it was at once to put the matter out of his own hands ; and who could say then but that the officers and lawyers between them, with their red-tape and self-importance, might so delay or blunder as to let the prize slip away even now ? No : Ruggles had no great respect for the methods of authority. And he did have the

most decided confidence in himself. He knew now just where the sloop, with Angus on board, was; and he believed he could catch her. And as long as he kept the matter to himself, he could manage it in his own way.

Over at the wharf next to where the steamer had landed lay a small tug, seemingly waiting for a job. Ruggles strolled over to where she was. He had plenty of time, and he did not mean to make any mistakes. He stood on the cap-log, looking her over and noting the men upon her deck. Her name was the "*Rapid*."

"Is your tug as good as her name?" he asked presently of one of the hands.

The man declared emphatically that she was.

"Is the captain on board?"

"No: that's him over yonder. He'll be back here pretty quick."

Ruggles walked across to where the captain, plainly distinguishable, was talking with another man. He was a bluff, determined-looking person, yet his face showed sense and good nature. Our hero made up his mind to address him.

"Is your tug engaged this morning?" he asked as the captain, a moment later, turned away from his companion.



ON THE DOCK

"That depends," was the answer. "I half agreed to take a schooner out round the Fort. I'm inclined to think there'll be breeze enough for her afore long, though. What 'd ye want?"

Ruggles, now as well satisfied as he could expect to be as to his man, quickly told what was necessary of his story. He wished to head off a certain sloop that was this moment coming down the West Passage. There was a boy on board who had been stolen and must be rescued. He did not want any officers of the law along. He thought that if he could once get on board the sloop he could, without using force, induce her people to give the child up. He had some influence with one of them. But he would, at the same time, like to have force enough to take him, if they refused. The boy's friends would shoulder all the responsibility. Ruggles' manner, as he stated all this, was such as to compel confidence. And he offered to pay for the tug in advance. The captain considered a single moment, and then consented to go. There were three men already on his vessel, and he could get two more on whom he could depend. And in talking it over the old sailor before long became as interested and aroused about it as Ruggles himself, and vowed he would get back the boy if he lost his license.

It was after one o'clock when they got started. Ruggles was beginning to worry lest the sloop should get out of the Bay after all; but Capt. Brease reassured him.

"They haint had a shawful of wind over there for the last hour," he declared. "We shall have to run up after 'em half a dozen miles at least. Besides, ef they did get out, they couldn't get away. I'd chase 'em from here to Cuby afore I'd give 'em up — the bloody pirates!"

And sure enough, when they got out past Beaver-tail, there was no such craft as Ruggles described anywhere in sight.

The breeze was freshening every moment, however, and they steamed rapidly away northward, so that it could not be long before the sloop would heave in sight, if she were really there. Ruggles was in the wheel-house with a spy-glass, noting every object; and his heart failed him at last, as sail after sail, coming nearer, proved to be not the one desired. Could it be that the *Sallie* had turned back and that Herron would somehow evade him after all? It was not likely; still his heart sank at the thought. But the very next moment he sighted a sail with a big patch on it, and he knew that it was the sloop.

The course of the *Rapid* was changed so as by and

by to bring her, without apparent intention, pretty close to the sloop. The latter was now on her star-board tack and well over under the land. They would meet her a little later, when she had come about. As they drew nearer still, Ruggles, with his glass, caught sight of the boy again; and almost immediately after that, as it became evident that the two vessels would pass very near each other, he saw one of the men (there were three now) go aft and lead the child below. From that moment he knew that he was on the right track.

As they approached nearer still, Ruggles carefully kept himself out of sight. There were sharp eyes on board the sloop, doubtless, as well as in the *Rapid's* wheel-house; and it was best to get as near as possible without exciting distrust. Five minutes later they were so close together that the sloop's name, in yellow letters on the bow, could be made out. It was the *Sallie Northup*.

And at length the time came when they were almost upon her, the sloop brought now directly across the *Rapid's* course, and the latter only a few fathoms away. A man jumped up on the *Sallie's* rail, holding on by the shroud. He was short and thick-set; and Ruggles perceived, with a sudden quickening of the pulse, that it was the "Boy."

"What are you up to?" he called out fiercely. "Do you want to run us down?"

"We're all right," Captain Brease shouted back. "What sloop is that?" The question was put more by way of opening the conversation than for any information.

"The *Sallie Northup*—out of Bristol last night. Bound for Greenport with a cargo of onions."

"Humph!" ejaculated Captain Brease under his breath. "Cargo of onions! Cargo of *young ones*, more likely." Then aloud, "Luff her up, will you. I want to talk with you."

The answer (whose exact wording it is not thought best to give) was to the effect that the other would do no such thing. He had something else to do besides talk.

The *Rapid*, at the last moment, had taken a sheer and swept around the *Sallie's* stern into a course parallel with that of the sloop, and was now running along with slackened speed beside her—so near indeed that one might easily have leaped from one vessel to the other.

"Take a rope for us, will you," shouted Brease from his pilot-house, not heeding the excited manner of those on board the sloop. "Barton, throw 'em a rope."



THE RAPID AND THE SALLIE NORTHUP.

But the other declared that he would take no rope from them at all. Captain Brease presently got quite red in the face with anger, and answered back something as decidedly uncomplimentary, at the same time proposing to Ruggles to board the sloop without further ado and make a search. "There isn't a man there we need be afraid of," argued he. "I can go aboard all by myself and knock their three heads together."

But Ruggles preferred a different course. He stepped out into view now and spoke to the stranger.

"You probably know me," he said. "I saw you a moment the other day. I want to see Herron. I know he is on board there. He went below a few minutes ago."

But the other declared in the strongest possible terms that he had never seen Ruggles before and never wanted to see him again. And as for there being another man below, how many hands did they suppose he carried to work one jib and a mainsail?

"Do ye think we can't count, ye rascal?" bawled out Captain Brease in a rage. "There were three men and a boy on your deck awhile ago."

"There is no use beating about the bush in this way," interposed our hero calmly. "We know per-

fectly well that you've got the boy. It will be better for you if you are reasonable."

At that moment the sloop's cabin-hatch was opened and Herron himself appeared in sight. He had heard plainly all that had passed, and had concluded it would be best to show himself.

"Ef it ain't Bright again!" were his first words, uttered in great apparent wonder. He stepped out upon deck, pulling the slide to behind him. "We do seem ter meet in the queerest ways! How come ye here, I'd like ter know."

Herron's manner was so innocent that Ruggles could not help laughing.

"It's of no sort of use, Herron," said he good-naturedly — "all this lying and pretension. You've got Angus Murdoch aboard here, and I want him. You don't deserve it; but for the sake of old times, if you'll give him up peaceably, you shall go free yourselves. If you don't — why, we shall come aboard and take him. Even if we couldn't do that, we could steam back to Newport and have a police-boat or a government vessel after you in no time. You see how it is."

Herron did see how it was, and he was not so foolish as to refuse these terms. Indeed, he did not even hesitate.

"Give him up?" answered he, readily. "Bless you, we'll give him up and welcome. He's ben a heap o' trouble! I hope, though, ye don't think we're ter blame at all for hevin' the boy along. He attached hisself ter me and insisted on my helpin' him ter run away ter sea. Ef you'll take him off our han's we'll be only too much obleeged ter ye."

He went and pushed back the slide again and called to the woman who was below to "bring up the boy." In another moment Angus was on deck and Ruggles had leaped on board the *Sallie* and had him by the hand. The boy had no appearance of having been a sufferer either mentally or physically.

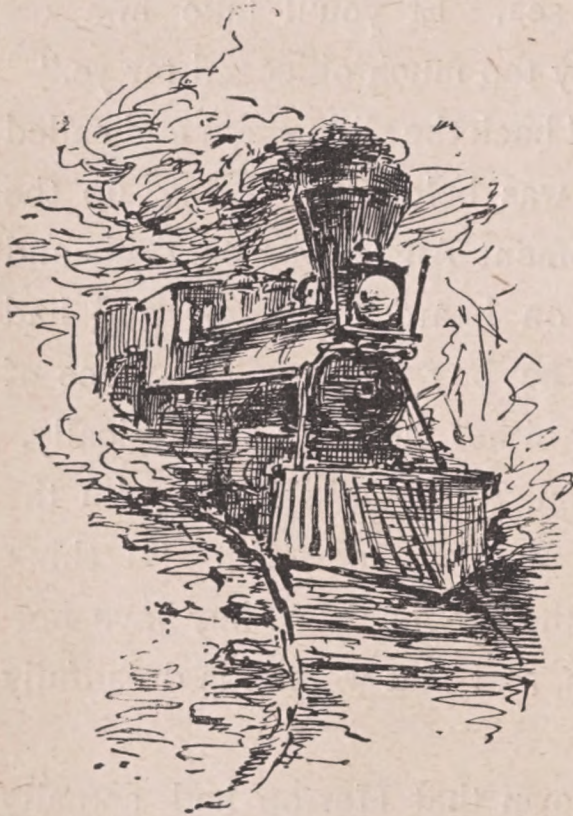
"I'm glad to see you, Ruggles," said he with the dignity of a travelled man of the world. "I think on the whole I had rather go back. They have horrid things to eat here, and that woman is dreadfully slack."

It later became known that Herron had actually persuaded Angus (when the child came to himself in the carriage) that he wanted to run away to sea; and Angus had adopted the idea with characteristic relish.

The boy, with what effects belonged to him, was at once transferred to the *Rapid*, and the two vessels parted again. Ruggles, at the last moment, had

taken pains to say one more word in the ear of Herron. He thought it as well to make sure of the latter's not turning up at Random again. He told him distinctly therefore that if ever he saw him again

anywhere, he would have him arrested for the present offense.



"RETURNED."

At Captain Brease's own suggestion, instead of turning back to Newport, the *Rapid* was run over to the western shore, and Ruggles and Angus landed at a point from which they were able to get conveyance to

Kingston in time to catch an afternoon train north. They went directly through to Boston, getting there about six. Ruggles took his charge over to the other dépôt and put him in care of the conductor of the late train out, asking him to look out for him and see he got out at Random Station. Probably there

would be some one to meet him. A telegram had been sent. Then he gave Angus a letter to Mr. Murdoch — which he had written on the train — and bade him good-by.

“I am not going out to-night,” he explained. “Be sure and not lose the letter. There’s some money in it.”

Then he shook Angus by the hand and ran to get off the train, which was already in motion.

CHAPTER XX.

A REVELATION.

The letter which Ruggles had written to Mr. Murdoch was as follows:—

“DEAR SIR: I send you this by Angus, who will tell you all about my finding him, and the true story of the kidnapping I trust that Mr. Clewer (and the rest) will believe now that I had nothing to do with it. You will understand now, too, how it was that I broke my promise about not leaving the place. I had to come away in the middle of the night, and I thought it best not to disturb anybody.

“What I feel worse now about than anything else is Black Douglas! Angus will tell you about it. He broke both fore-legs going over a rotten bridge, and I had to shoot him. I left word about him at a livery stable at F——, if you choose to do anything about his body. He deserves a monument.

“I have concluded that after what has passed I had best not come back to Hollownook. Now that the horse is dead I shall

hardly be indispensable. I will write again in a few days and give directions where to send my things. Respectfully yours,

“THOMAS RUGGLES.

“P. S. I enclose what was left of the money you gave me Tuesday morning. I gave twenty-five dollars to the captain of the tug.”

It was not until the next morning at breakfast that Mr. Murdoch showed this letter to the family. Angus and his wonderful story had occupied all attention the night before; and Ruggles, although frequently mentioned, was nobody's chief thought. His great service was appreciated, and all felt deep regret at the wrong that had been done him. And Honor, for one, resolved to make all possible amends when she saw him again. Until the letter was read, nobody, save Mr. Murdoch, had a thought but that he would return the next day.

“I've a letter from Ruggles,” the gentleman had said, when they were about through breakfast. “He sent it out by Angus last night. He says he is not coming back.”

“Not coming back!” exclaimed Mrs. Murdoch. And the others echoed her surprise. “What do you mean?”

“Here is the letter. I'll read it.” And he did.

They all listened with attention. They had already

known about Black Douglas, and the allusion to his death caused no remark. It was what was said in the last few lines that made the most impression. Ruggles was evidently deeply hurt; and nobody could wonder at it.

"He *must* come back," said Honor decidedly. "I will write to him myself and beg his pardon. Where is he?"

"He does not say," answered Mr. Murdoch, glancing at the letter again. "But when he sends for his things, I shall write to him myself. I always thought well of him; but this affair has shown him up for a really *noble* fellow. Of course we must have him back."

"And yet," remarked Mrs. Murdoch thoughtfully, "we can hardly be blamed for suspecting him. Why, just think of what there was against him — his connection with the tramp and his refusing to explain about having been in Angus' room that night. I declare, I don't understand it now."

"By the way," said Mr. Murdoch, "don't let me forget to telegraph to Clewer. He won't need now to work up that clue he thought he discovered yesterday."

"What *could* have been his reasons for refusing to explain about the tramp and the button?" said Den-

sie, going on with Mrs. Murdoch's thought. "He said it entirely concerned himself. It must have been a secret of importance, else he would have told it at such a time." There was a world of feminine curiosity in Densie's tone.

"What is it about the button?" interposed Angus. He had been digging down into the bottom of his coffee cup for the sugar; but his ears were, as usual, wide open.

"Angus," asked Honor suddenly, "was Ruggles in your room any time that night you were carried off?"

Angus seemed at that moment to have discovered a fresh deposit of sugar in his cup, for he went down into it deeper than before.

"Ah!" murmured he, smacking his lips, "isn't that good! They sweetened their coffee with molasses on board the *Sallie Northup*. Ugh!"

The question was repeated, however; and Angus, unable to ignore it a second time, looked up rather impudently at his aunt, and answered slowly, without taking his spoon from his mouth,

"What do you want to know for?"

"Angus!" spoke up his father sternly, "answer as you ought."

"Well," said Angus, not greatly abashed, "yes, he

was." He thought to himself that to say so much was no violation of his word.

"At what time?" asked Honor.

"'Bout half-past ten, I guess."

"What was he doing there?"

"That I *sha'n't* tell," returned Angus decidedly. And then, catching his father's eye, "Well, I *can't*! I gave my word I wouldn't."

This was conceded to settle the matter so far as taking Angus' testimony was concerned. And it also showed that Ruggles' having been in the boy's room — since it turned out to have been the evening before, after all — had not necessarily anything to do with the kidnaping. But the curiosity of everybody, particularly Densie's, was now all the more excited.

"Why," exclaimed the latter, "that was before the party broke up. Indeed, it must have been about the time we dropped our sheets and pillow-cases." Then all at once she clapped her hands together with an expression of great glee. "Oh, I know now!" she cried. "And that was the reason we could find nothing of him after that! Honor, don't you remember the Unknown? It was Ruggles, of course. Why did we not guess it before? And Angus smuggled him off into his room. Is not that it, Angus?"

"Mebbe it is, and mebbe it isn't," answered Angus. But he was not given to the deeper methods of dissimulation, and his countenance gave assurance that Densie was right. The mystery of the button at least was now fully solved. Ruggles had probably dropped it in pulling off his disguise. And he had refused to explain it because he had not dared tell of his having taken his place unbidden among the guests. It seemed strange enough still that he had not explained it, since it was the strongest point that the detective had made against him.

Honor presently asked to be excused, and getting up from the table rather abruptly, went out through the hall and music-room to the library. Densie came upon her there a few minutes later, sitting and gazing at her palm-leaf fan with a more thoroughly puzzled expression than ever.

"Densie," said she, "I wish you would ask Mr. Murdoch to let you take Ruggles' letter a moment. We'll soon see if he was the Unknown."

So Densie went and got the letter; and its handwriting was eagerly compared with that of the verse upon the fan. A single glance at them, side by side, showed them to be the same.

"For the life of me, though," mused Honor, "I can't imagine what he meant by saying that his own

name was to be found somewhere in the four lines. He did say so distinctly ; and it seems all the more likely to have been truth, now we know it was Ruggles."

She took up the fan again and read the lines once more, aloud :

" ' Alas, poor me ! what can I do,
When asked by Honor Bright,
To write my name upon her fan,
But take my pen and write ? ' "

" It will take sharper eyes than mine to find *Thomas Ruggles* written there anywhere," said she. " If it is there at all, it must be worked in somehow like a puzzle. I declare, it's as aggravating as one of those pictures that you're to look for all sorts of animals and things in — and you can't always find them when you know they are there."

Densie also took the fan once more and looked carefully at the lines. Had Ruggles been standing by at that moment, he would have trembled for his precious secret. Densie Drew had sharp eyes ; and she already knew of the letters " H. B." upon his arm, although the thought of them did not enter her head at this moment. It seems hardly possible that she could have looked at these verses now, knowing

as much as she did, and not see the truth ! Yet she did not see it. Her talents were not in any sense literary ; and this might be said to be a literary puzzle. Besides, she was really very skeptical as to any name being there at all. She never had such faith in what people said as Honor did. She threw the fan down on the table the next moment.

“It isn’t there at all !” said she impatiently. “Of course it isn’t there ! He wasn’t going to tell who he was. Why, he wouldn’t tell about it even to prove he didn’t help steal Angus. I must say he was remarkably entertaining that night. I never should have known but he was just like other people, instead of being a coachman.”

Then all at once the suspicion she had formerly cherished that Ruggles was concealing his real name, flashed across her. No matter how important a thing might be, it was either entirely *in* or *out* of Densie’s mind at any given time. That was a peculiarity of hers.

“His name couldn’t be *Wright*, could it ?” suggested she.

“I asked him that, myself,” said Honor, “and he did not deny it.”

“At any rate,” said Densie, “I hope you will get him back again. There is some mystery about him,

I am certain. And *I* mean to investigate it. You must get him back before I go."

"You won't go for a long while yet," said Honor. "You are to stay until after my birthday, you know."

"And that is — I declare I've forgotten!"

"That is the third of September. I shall then attain my 'majority.' Eighteen years old already! Just think of it!"

"Yes, just think of it!" observed Densie. "And then you will really come into all that money?"

"Yes," was the reply. "That won't make any particular difference, though. I have just the same as had it for a long while."

"Just the same, only then it will be yours *sure*. Even if the other Honor Bright should come back after that, he could not claim it, could he?"

"No, I suppose not. But that would make no difference. If he ever should come back I certainly should not think of keeping it just because it was mine legally. Mr. Bright wanted the money to go to him, of course, if he were alive."

"You foolish girl!" declared Densie. "*I* would keep it. But then, of course, he never *will* come back. It was dreadful to go off so and be lost at sea. And how romantic it all was — his running away, and being drowned, and the money and the

name coming to you ! I didn't suppose such things ever happened except in stories. And to think that I should have known you both, one at one time and one at another. I remember him perfectly well — just how he looked.

I should know him this minute if he came into the room. I always remember people, no matter how much they change. By the way, I haven't ever shown you what he wrote in my album. And I brought it on purpose for you to see. It is real romantic, as things turned out. But if he hadn't been drowned after all, it would have been mere nonsense. I'll go and get it this minute."



A REMEMBRANCE.

And not one particle out of breath with all this fast talking Densie ran off up-stairs to get the album, Honor sitting still meanwhile, thinking over all

these strange facts connected with her name and fortune.

It seemed to take Densie some little time to find the album. Her trunk was always in a complete state of chaos; and when she wanted anything from it she generally would shut her eyes and plunge in her hand, as one does into a grab-box, and take out one object at a time until she got the right one. She came down with the book at last, however — a thin, oblong autograph album of no particular elegance, a relic of her younger days. She handed it to Honor, already open at the place she wished her to see.

Honor took the book somewhat absently. The lines were a quotation from Burns :

“One friendly sigh for him, he asks no more,
Who distant burns in flaming, torrid climes,
Or haply lies beneath Atlantic's roar.”

Beneath this was written the word “*Trellisdale*,” with the date. And then, in a large, flourishing and peculiar school-boy hand, the name: “HONOR BRIGHT.” Of course, it was the seemingly prophetic allusion in the last line, and her own connection with the young writer, that gave this its special interest to Honor.

The girl read the lines through, scarcely thoughtful of their sense. But when her eyes fell upon the



HONOR IS MORE PUZZLED THAN EVER.

signature, Densie, who was watching her, saw them suddenly dilate, and she sat staring at the page as though it were somebody's death warrant.

"Mercy! Honor, what is the matter?" cried she.

"One would think you saw his ghost in the handwriting. Why, you are actually turning white. You're not going to faint, are you?"

Honor did not say a single word in reply. She got up instead, and putting the album down, still open, on the table, walked steadily across the room to the book-shelves by the window. From one of these she took a large book — it was a Latin lexicon — and holding it upside down, shook out a piece of paper from among the leaves. This she picked up, and returning to the table, took up the album again and held it side by side with the paper.

"I knew it!" she said, in a low, awed voice. "They are exactly the same. How strange that I never guessed it long ago! Densie, Honor Bright has come to life again. He *has* come back. *Ruggles* is Honor Bright! Oh, I am *so* glad! I am just as glad as I can be!"

Densie listened to these words in perfect astonishment. And she gazed with wonder at the name upon the paper, seeing at once that it must have been written by the same person who had signed the

verses in her album, but not understanding, of course, what Ruggles had to do with the matter.

In a few excited words, however, Honor told her the story of the fly-leaf — how she and Livy had found a book on Ruggles' table with her name upon the leaf, and how foolishly she had interpreted the fact. Ah, how easy it was to see now that this book was one that had been his long before, and that he had only written in it his own name!

Densie, quick enough to understand when the wonderful fact was thus set before her, was completely overcome by it.

"Then he wasn't lost at sea, after all?" she slowly said, in a tone that actually had a little bit of disappointment in it.

"No," replied Honor.

"And he has been out in Colorado or somewhere all this while, and came back here by and by and passed himself off for a coachman?"

"Yes."

"How stupid!"

"Stupid?"

"How stupid of *us* not to have guessed it! Why, look at that fan! There is the name, '*Honor Bright*,' as plain as can be! And he told me, that night, that he belonged to the Bright family. I don't

think *I* belong to the Bright family. Why, I knew long ago that those were his initials — ‘H. B.’ — and I hadn’t sense enough to apply them! And only three years ago he went home with me from a surprise party, too! I am provoked with myself for not guessing.”

“It is very easy to put all these things together now that we have the key to it all,” said Honor, smiling. “I can understand a hundred things in Ruggles’ manner, and that he has said, that I quite misunderstood at the time. What could have been his object, though, in coming here in this way and taking the place of a coachman?”

“He did it for the fun of the thing, of course.” Densie could very easily find a motive for it.

“But why did he never make himself known — later. There have been times when one would have thought he would have done so.” Honor was thinking at this moment of a certain morning just before the Fourth, when she had so haughtily turned upon her coachman and told him what was his “place.” And then she recalled the events of the last few days. “Why, if he had told us who he was, that night in the library when the detective accused him, it would have settled the whole matter! And he never said a word.”

"He was so obstinate that he *wouldn't*," declared Densie.

But *that* did not quite answer the question for Honor. And she had something to ponder upon later. But there was no time to say or think more of the matter now, for Livingston (who had been away from home for several days) was at this moment heard in the hall — wanting to know what was all this about Angus having been kidnapped; and was Ruggles really in jail; and when was the next archery meeting to be?

CHAPTER XXI.

A CHANGE OF SCENE.

IN a few days there came a note from Ruggles asking that his things be sent by express to a certain address in Boston. These "things" were not many, his clothes, a number of books that he had accumulated, some drawings and papers, and the old leathern bag which had come with him. But it was found necessary to put them in a box; and Honor herself, assisted by Angus, attended to the packing. Mr. Murdoch wrote a letter to go with them, in the kindest and strongest terms urging Ruggles to come back to Hollownook. He said nothing of the discovery they seemed to have made as to the lad's real name. This at Honor's suggestion. She felt sure that if he were aware how much they now knew, Ruggles would not come back. Indeed, it had been thought best to

say nothing of the matter to anybody outside the house for the present. And even Angus was not taken into confidence.

Ruggles' answer when it came was very brief, and simply repeated the words he had used before. After what had passed he did not think it best that he should return. He was very grateful to Mr. Murdoch, and to them all, for their kindness; but he had already found another job, and it was not likely they would ever hear of him again. There was no address or date added, and nothing to say whither he was going or where he might be found. Evidently he had meant it to end the matter.

Honor took the note, and sitting down alone with it, she tried to read between the lines. And thinking over all that had passed in the last two months, recalling many of Ruggles' acts and words—what he had said to her one day upon Mizpah, his bearing the morning she had spoken so unfeelingly in her attempt to teach him his "place," some enthusiastic words he had let fall the night of the masquerade as they sat together upon the piazza, and his strange behavior throughout this affair of the kidnapping—gradually and imperfectly at first, but by and by distinctly and decidedly enough, there came to her an understanding of what it all meant. It was clear

enough at last, as she put the solution of the problem into words half-whispered to herself. Ruggles — Honor Bright — did not mean to claim either his name or his inheritance at all. He meant to leave them still with her, thinking she would never know. He had meant so all along.

That explained it all. Honor's cheek burned as the truth fairly forced itself upon her at last. She got up and walked back and forth, mortified and indignant. The idea that she, Honor Bright, should consent to keep and use that which belonged of right to another ! That was all that the fact was to her for a moment. And the thought was so repugnant to her pride that she was fairly angry with this young fellow that he should have imagined such a thing. But it should not be ! She would show him ! She would starve first ! And even when, presently sitting down again in more reasonable mood, and remembering that this act of renunciation on the part of her young kinsman, since he had never meant her to know it, was far from being an insult to her, and must have sprung from the noblest motives, and was worthy of all respect and admiration rather than anger, still the sense of shame at the thought of it did not cease, and she still repeated to herself that it should never be. The true heir, the nephew whom

old Mr. Bright had always wished to succeed him, was alive after all; and the will had provided for his return. The matter was perfectly simple. Honor Bright—the real Honor Bright, Ruggles—must take what was his. *She* certainly had no longer any right or title to it. She would not keep it under any circumstances. She found herself again growing very angry at the thought.

And just at this time, oddly enough, there came a letter from Mr. Lambert, bearing upon this same matter. It was written at Rock Island, Illinois, where he had stopped a few days on his way East after his summer's trip. He had something very strange to tell them, he said. By the merest accident, he had discovered, while at San Francisco, that a lad named Honor Bright had formerly been known there; and in following up this information, he had come upon facts that led him to the almost certain belief that Mr. Bright's nephew had never been lost at sea as was supposed, but had come to California, had later made his way into Colorado, and after living there and in New Mexico for a time, had, this same spring or summer, started back East. That was all that Mr. Lambert had been able to learn. Perhaps they had already seen or heard something of the young man. At any rate, he should be home in

less than a fortnight now, and would see Mr. Murdoch at once.

Thus it came about that although Honor was entirely settled in mind as to the matter, and had quite ceased to look upon herself as longer even a possible heir to the Bright estate, yet nothing was actually done in any way up to the middle of August. It seemed now altogether necessary to wait until Mr. Lambert could be consulted. Meanwhile no tidings of any sort came to them of Ruggles. It seemed to Honor sometimes as though his having come to Hollownook was only a dream, and that really there had never been any such person, so completely had he dropped out of the life there.

When word came that Mr. Lambert was arrived, Mr. Murdoch and Honor went to town to see him, and all the facts of the case were put together and considered. Mr. Lambert had been not only Mr. Bright's lawyer, but his trusted friend, and his interest in the matter was not merely professional. He knew that the old gentleman would have much preferred that his property should go to his nephew if the boy were really alive; and the lawyer wished to do everything in his power to carry out the wishes of the deceased. Yet he was very fond of Honor too; and it

relieved him greatly to learn now how decidedly she agreed with him in all this.

"The bother of it is," he said by and by, "the bother of it is that the time is so short. It is evident, from what you have told me, that the foolish fellow doesn't mean to turn up, himself. And if we don't find him before the third of September it will be too late."

But Honor did not see how the third of September had anything to do with it. The money was certainly his, not hers; and she should not take it under any circumstances.

"But it will be yours, legally, if he doesn't turn up before then," said Mr. Lambert, "and you can't help yourself."

"Do you mean to say that the law can *make* me take the money if I don't want to?" demanded Honor with magnificent indignation.

"There is no question of your taking it at all," answered the lawyer. "You have been enjoying the income of it all this while, and are practically in possession of it. It becomes yours finally and beyond peradventure on your next birthday. The boy's turning up again is a mere contingency. It must actually happen in order to affect the matter."

"But he *has* 'turned up,'" protested Honor.

Mr. Lambert shook his head.

“I’m afraid it would be hard work to show that,” said he, “unless we can find him. However certain we may be, there is really no proof that this coachman of yours was Honor Bright, and nothing that I have discovered out West will help us any. He must actually appear and claim the estate — at least, there must be some more tangible proof of his existence than anything we now have. No,” — the old gentleman had paused thoughtfully, shaking his head slowly all the while, — “no; there’s only one thing to do. *We must find him.* If we don’t, the money will certainly go to you. There will be no end of complications, at any rate.”

“I won’t take it!” declared Honor, stamping her foot, and quite exasperated at her helplessness in the matter. “I will never touch a single cent of it as long as I live!”

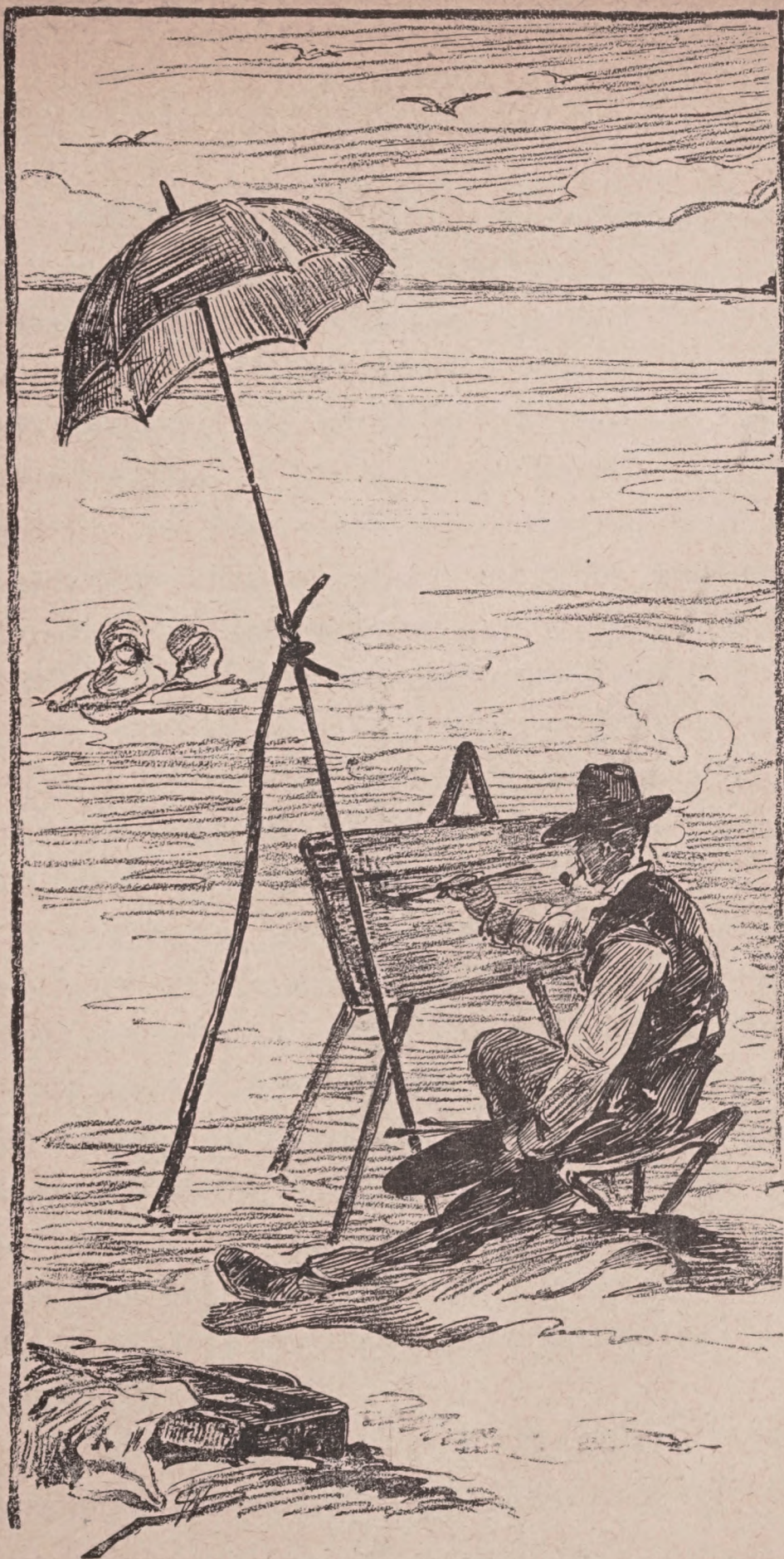
The lawyer laughed.

“Oh, well, as for that, I have no doubt we shall find him,” said he, “unless he has shipped himself off to sea again. *We must find him!* I will set the detectives at work at once. Nobody ever gets far nowadays, in this time of telegraphs and telephones. You will hear from me, in a day or two, that we are on his track.”

And so the interview ended.

But they did not hear from Mr. Lambert in a day or two. The best part of another week passed. Then Mrs. Murdoch, who had not been very well of late, took a notion that she needed sea-air, and declared that she was going down to N—— for a week or two, and that Honor and Densie must go with her. This plan, thus suddenly conceived, was put into execution the next day but one; and the party, with Livy added to it, took an early train to town of a Wednesday morning. At the Old Colony dépôt they came suddenly upon Mr. Lambert. He told Honor that Mr. Clewer, to whom the case had been confided, had just gotten hold of a clue. He had found a place where Ruggles had sold his revolver the same night that Angus had returned; and through this it had been ascertained that he had shipped on board a coal schooner that ran to Rondout, N. Y. He had made only one trip, however, and then, the schooner putting into Stonington over night, he had asked for his discharge and disappeared again. The detective was confident, however, of finding him very soon.

N—— is a certain one of the almost innumerable summer resorts that dot the shores of southern New England. It is perhaps neither very important nor



A CERTAIN DISTINGUISHED ARTIST.

very well known ; yet it is of sufficient consequence to have had a magazine article written about it, and a certain distinguished artist has a queer little studio there of his own contrivance and is to be found in it every season. Its advantages are negative rather than positive. It has no large hotels, no showy cottages, no long beach with boisterous surf, no steamboats and trains coming and going, no crowds, no noise, no great amount of gayety. It is a quiet, out-of-the-way place, consisting simply of one ordinary broad piazzaed hotel, with clusters of comfortable cottages gathered here and there about it, a broad piece of sheltered ocean before, and stretches of attractive country landscape behind.

Yet, quiet and not pretentious as N—— is, there are hosts of pleasant people who love it and make their way back to it year by year. It is a place where one may *rest*; and after all, that is the best use to which one's vacations can be put. Mrs. Murdoch had chosen to come to N—— because rest was what she needed, and she had heard the place highly spoken of. Besides, it was very easy for Mr. Murdoch to come down Saturday noon and stay over Sunday.

As for the rest of the party, the quiet life suited Honor completely ; and even Densie, though she

would decidedly have preferred Newport or Mt. Desert, yet, with the willing assistance of some twenty other young people whom she found there, managed to exist with tolerable content. Livy was of that easy, healthy disposition that enjoys almost anything that does not involve labor or positive discomfort; and Angus, of course, was not long in finding friends and adventures to his mind. It is not purposed, however, to dwell here upon anything that these friends of ours said and did at N——, save as to the events of a certain twenty-four hours which have especially to do with — and which, indeed, close — this story.

There came an afternoon that was excessively hot and still and sultry. Not a particle of air seemed stirring on land or sea. Densie was sitting on the hotel piazza, and Livy was lying in a hammock that hung close by. Nobody else seemed to be anywhere in sight.

“Oh dear!” groaned the young lady; “how dreadfully still and warm it is! It seems as though the whole world had died for want of breath. I wish I had gone with them to Nantucket.”

“It strikes me,” drawled Livy in a half-awake sort of manner, “that one can’t do better on a day like this than sit here in a Wakefield chair and fan one’s self.”

"Fan one's self, indeed!" repeated Densie impatiently. "I don't want to have to make a breeze. I want one ready-made. I do believe there is the faintest sign of a ripple on the water away out yonder. I would like to go out there and sit in it. The Alsop boys are not using their boat, are they?"

"Why, no; they went to Nantucket, you know."

"Of course. Well, then, we can have it. I want to go rowing. Come!" And Densie rose from her seat.

"And you want me to do the rowing for you?" murmured Livy without opening his eyes. "I declare! That's cool."

"I hope you will find it so," said Densie dryly. "But come. We won't go far and there won't be much rowing to do. I'll go up and tell Honor. Come! You've got to go. If you don't —"

"Oh, I'll go," said Livy.

Densie presently came down again with Honor, and the three started down toward the headland where the boat was kept. Angus had been invited to join the party; but he and the Macullar boy had a tub full of tadpoles down at the barn, which were confidently expected to turn into frogs before night, and could not be left.

The boat was an ordinary row-boat, one that the Alsop boys had hired over at New Bedford. The oars lay in the bottom, and also a mast with a piece of sail wound around it. Livy would have thrown out the latter, but Honor suggested that they might want it if they found their breeze. Honor sat in the bow, and Densie took her place at the rudder-lines, while Livy took the oars and pulled lazily off from shore. The water was smooth as glass, but there certainly was a breeze out yonder, a half-mile or so. They could see it upon the water. And besides, still further away, a schooner could be seen, with sails all set and filled. There were some clouds, a trifle dark and threatening, piled up against the horizon off to the south; but nobody seemed to notice them.

They talked all the while as they moved along—at least Densie and Livingston did—of this and that, as idle people do, half-drifting upon a summer sea. Honor sat in silence under her umbrella, her finger still between the leaves of the book of poems she had been reading when Densie had called her. She was in a dreamy, half-conscious mood, like one sitting in a painted boat upon a painted ocean. The sound of her companions' voices fell pleasantly upon



CONFIDENTLY EXPECTING THEM TO TURN INTO FROGS.

her ears, but she hardly noticed what they said, and rarely joined in the conversation.

By and by Livy stopped rowing.

"It's awful warm," said he, taking off his hat and wiping his brow. "I am perspiring at every single one of my two million three hundred and four thousand pores. I read once that that was the estimated number of the pores of the human body."

"I guess you are like Mark Twain," observed Densie. "It makes you sick to ride backwards — and work."

"We have come a pretty good distance, at any rate," said Livy. Then he looked around behind him. "See how much nearer that schooner is. Why, she looks like a yacht. I wonder where she is going. Over to Hadley Harbor, maybe. The fleet hasn't gone out yet, has it?"

"No," answered Densie. "They're to stay another day — so the *Standard* said. How I would like to have been on board one of them in the race yesterday! I think you might have made your friend take us."

"I have already told you," protested Livy, "that I am not certain that the *Curlew* is with the fleet at all. And if she were, I don't know Brandagee well enough to invite myself and all my friends into his

yacht. I was with him only one term at Exeter. Besides, it isn't his yacht at all. It's his father's. You might have gone down in the *Monohansett* yesterday, if you had wanted to see the race. She followed them over the whole course."

Then there was a pause in the conversation for a few moments.

"Ah!" cried Livy presently, "did you feel that?" He still had his hat off. "I do believe it was a breath of air."

Densie dipped her finger in the water and held it up.

"That is the way we do at sea," she gravely explained. But she could not feel any air. "It was only a puff," said she.

"There it is again!" declared Livy. And this time they both felt it. "I am going to put up the sail—if it is put-up-able. Sailing is a good deal easier than rowing."

So he drew in his oars, and pulling out the sail from under the seats he succeeded with some difficulty in stepping the mast and adjusting the sprit that ran up to the corner of the sail. Then he came and sat down in the stern-sheets, Densie moving up amidships with Honor.

There evidently was some air blowing, for the sail

filled as Livy pulled the sheet aft and made it fast. Livy did not profess to be much of a sailor; but no great skill seemed required in the management of the present craft. And besides, it did not make any particular difference which way they went. The wind did not blow steadily at all, but still came in gentle puffs, frequent enough, however, to keep the boat in motion.

“By the way, Honor,” spoke Livingston presently, “speaking of the *Monohansett*, she goes to Rocky Point and Newport Friday. We ought to get up a party and go. You’ve been talking all summer of a trip down Narragansett Bay.”

“Yes,” put in Densie, “and it will be all the more interesting now as the scene of Angus’ adventures.” She paused a moment, and then added, “I wonder what *has* become of — of Ruggles.”

“Though lost to sight, to memory dear!” said Livy. “We can never talk half an hour without Ruggles coming into the conversation. I wouldn’t wonder if we should run across him at some of these shore resorts, waiting on the tables or something. Lots of second-rate fellows do that in summer-time.”

“As for that,” observed Honor quietly, “I have known of several college students doing it, and, though they were poor and had to work in summer to

pay their expenses in winter, they were not 'second-rate fellows' at all. We met one last summer at the Winslow House who was leading his class. And as for Ruggles" — Honor's voice deepened a little and her face kindled — "I think I ought to say that I believe him to be not 'second-rate' in any respect, but '*first-rate*' in the best sense of the term."

"Well," said Livy, "but what was it Mr. Lambert was saying in the dépôt the other morning — about the detectives being after him? And what is all this mystery about Angus' being carried off? What has Ruggles run off for? *I* believe there is something you don't like to tell in the matter; and if the truth were known, Ruggles isn't at all the saint you would have us think."

"Since you so object to his name being brought into the conversation, suppose we drop the subject," said Honor coldly.

"His ears must burn, wherever he is," remarked Densie.

At that instant a dark shadow fell ominously upon the boat and upon the water about it. They looked up quickly. One of the clouds that nobody had noticed had climbed up and suddenly shut the sun from sight; and others, black and fierce, were gathering all about. And then, before anybody could

speaking, another puff of wind, stronger than any that had preceded it, struck the sail squarely and bent the boat to her gunnel.

Honor jumped up from her seat.

"The rope! the rope!" cried she. "Unfasten the rope! Have you lost your head, Livy!"

Livy put his hand to his head in a bewildered sort of way, as though not quite sure but that he might have lost it. And under different circumstances he might have answered that it had been "snapped off." But he had wit enough at this moment to realize that it was no time for a display of wit. He saw the danger too, and understood what Honor meant.

He fumbled hurriedly at the sheet that had been made fast to a cleat close by him. But he was nervous and awkward, and it took him too long to undo the rope. There was a hoarse growl of thunder from behind the clouds over in the west; and then there came another puff of wind, this time the fierce, angry breath of the squall itself. Instantly the sail bent down before it to the water's surface; and the next moment the boat was floating bottom upwards in the bay.

CHAPTER XXII.

ON BOARD THE CURLEW.

FOR a moment or two things certainly looked serious ; but it was nothing worse than a good wetting that happened to them after all. Nobody was hurt by the capsizing of the boat and luckily, nobody was in any way entangled in it as it turned. Livy, however inefficient he may have been before the disaster, behaved like a man immediately after it. And so did Honor too, for that matter. The latter was a confident swimmer, and when, coming to the surface and finding Livy close beside her, he moved to help her, she motioned him toward Densie, who had appeared a little further away and seemed to be in some trouble. And in less time than it has taken to write so much of this chapter, all three had regained the boat and were clinging to it.

“I am so glad Angus did not come with us !” was almost the first thing Honor said. She did not seem

to think of herself at all. And then, seeing that Densie looked pale and frightened, she sought to reassure her. "It is not so very bad, after all," said she. "The boat certainly can't upset again. And we can cling to it without difficulty. Why, it is just like being in bathing, for all the world." And indeed it was a fact that the three of them had before this been in deep water with this very boat, turned bottom upwards as it was now. And there was as yet no trouble in clinging to it, though the wind was really blowing now and the water was far from smooth. The clouds were thick overhead too, and the lightning was darting here and there among them, accompanied by constant mutterings of thunder.

"I believe it is going to rain," observed Livy lugubriously.

"And I have lost my umbrella," cried Honor laughingly. She was determined to keep up their spirits if she could. "We shall certainly get sopping wet."

Then all at once Livy raised himself out of the water as far as he could.

"Hurrah! hurrah!" cried he. "Look there, will you! They must have seen us when we went over. Halloo! halloo!" And he waved his arm with all his might.

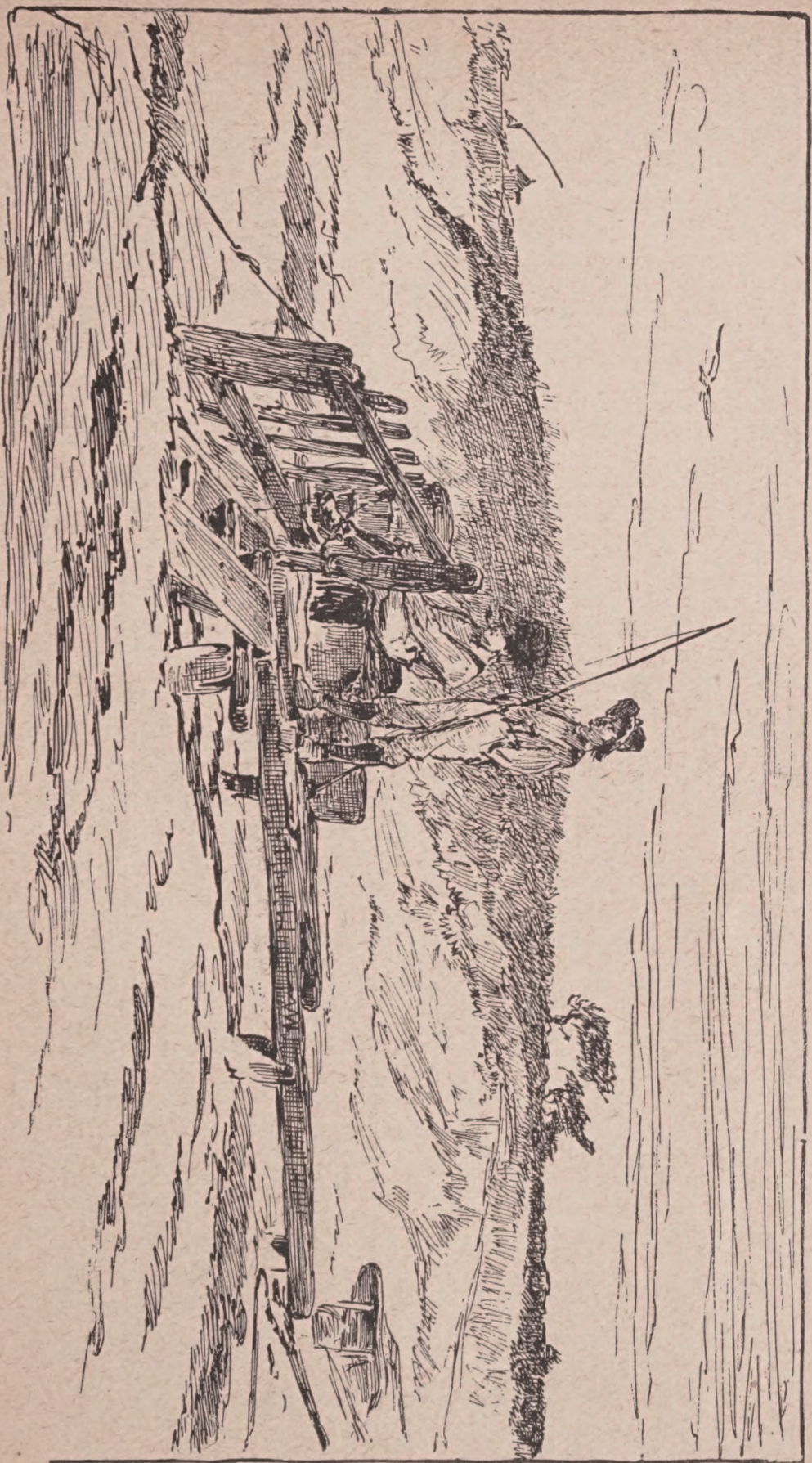
The other two, looking quickly, saw with delight that the yacht which had sometime before attracted their attention was now hardly a quarter of a mile away and was coming down upon them rapidly, though under shortened sail.

"Oh dear!" murmured Densie characteristically. "We are in a pretty condition to go on board a yacht. How we *shall* look with our dresses all sticking to us! And my montagues are completely washed out."

At which Honor and Livy both laughed outright; and all three found themselves awaiting the nearer approach of the stranger in increasingly good spirits. After all, as Honor said again, the whole affair was really not more serious than going in bathing off the headland. The water was perfectly warm, and they all knew how to swim. It would be quite an adventure to tell of when they got on shore again.

The yacht came flying down with a free wind; and it was scarcely five minutes before she was close upon them. They could see a young man, apparently about Livy's age, dressed in a white cap and yachting suit, standing near the wheel and watching them. And there was a young lady close beside him. The former called out to them.

"Hold on a minute longer," he shouted. "Can you hold on?"



SEASHORE AT N.—WAITING FOR THE TIDE.

"All right. There is no hurry," Livy answered back.

And then the yacht came up into the wind, and in a moment a boat, with two men in it and the young fellow in the white cap, was pulling swiftly toward them.

"Well, well!" uttered Livy, all at once recognizing in the one at the helm an old acquaintance. "If that isn't Fred Brandagee!"

And then, as presently the girls were lifted out of the water and saw the name "*Curlew*" on the caps of the men, and Livy shaking hands with the officer, they understood that the yacht which had so promptly come to their rescue was the very one of which they had been speaking a little while ago.

It was natural enough that Densie should have felt some misgivings as to the figure they would make going on board the yacht. Livy, in his drenched garments, hatless and with dishevelled hair, looked pitiable enough; but the two girls — as young ladies are sure to do under such circumstances — presented an even more wretched appearance. They passed it off as good-naturedly as possible, however, laughing and joking at each other. Young Brandagee was very polite and considerate; and having secured the painter of the other boat, directed the men to pull as

rapidly as possible back to the yacht. His sister was on board the *Curlew*, he said, and they could be as well cared for there as though they were at home. And when, a minute after, they arrived at the vessel's side, a bright and winning young lady received them with the utmost kindness, and at once took the two girls below that they might change their apparel and make themselves once more presentable. As for Livy, Brandagee himself took charge of him, placing his own state-room and extensive wardrobe at his service.

It was not long before they all came together in the cabin again, the shipwrecked party now in the best of spirits and seemingly not a bit the worse for their mishap. Densie had borrowed a blue sailor-suit of Miss Brandagee which seemed to fit her perfectly and was extremely becoming. And with the aid of a bottle of bandoline which she had discovered, she had been able to restore her "montagues" to something of their former perfection. Honor had accepted the use of a black silk dress which, since the sudden change in the weather, was found to be not too warm.

They could now hear the rain falling heavily on the deck above, and the storm howling about them. It was quite dark in the cabin, and the lamps had been

lighted. A table had been invitingly set, and Miss Brandagee insisted that they should at least drink some hot tea, to ensure their suffering no ill effects from their involuntary wetting. So they sat down around the table and enjoyed a very cosy little tea-drinking together. Honor and Livy were so seated that most of their talk was with Miss Brandagee, whom they found an exceedingly likeable young person. Young Brandagee found himself to a large extent appropriated by Miss Drew; but as that young lady was now at her very brightest and best, he considered his position anything but irksome.

It seemed that the *Curlew* was with the fleet, and indeed had been in the race yesterday—and might have stood a fair chance of winning it, Fred Brandagee assured Densie, only that there was so little wind that the sloops had it all their own way. The yachts were still at New Bedford. Mr. and Mrs. Brandagee had gone on shore to stay at the hotel, and Fred himself had taken the *Curlew* out this afternoon on his own responsibility. Of course they had a skipper aboard. As soon as the storm was over—it bade fair not to last very long—they would run over to N—— and land the visitors. Just at present Captain Stillwater thought it best to keep pretty well off shore.

Honor urged that Miss Brandagee and her brother go ashore with them and pay them a little visit at the hotel. They really must not part company at once. But Miss Brandagee said that the yachts were going out at sunrise to-morrow and they would have to be back before nine to-night, as her father and mother were coming off at that hour. The young lady's brother seemed to have overheard this last statement and spoke up quickly from his end of the table :

"You're mistaken about that, Ruth," said he; "father said he shouldn't come on board until to-morrow morning."

Miss Brandagee shook her head. "I was there," said she, "and I am positive he said to-night. It isn't likely they want to get up and come down to the dock at sunrise to-morrow morning."

"But we are not obliged to go out so early just because the rest do. I am sure that he said nine o'clock in the *morning*. I was there too, you remember." He spoke so earnestly that he might easily have been supposed to have a decided wish in the matter.

"Well," returned his sister, "we shall have to leave it to Tom. He took us on shore, and must have heard what was said." Then she leaned forward and called up the companion-way to the skipper, who was at the wheel. "Captain Stillwater, is Tom

on deck? Please send him down here a moment."

The voice of the seaman was heard calling to somebody forward; and a minute later one of the crew came down the cabin stairs.

"It was Tom that I wanted," said Miss Brandagee, looking up and perceiving that the new-comer was somebody else.

"Tom was busy overhauling a — overhauling the jib down-haul; an' so I came in his place," explained the man. And then he added confidentially, "I guess he's a bit bashful about the ladies."

"Well, you can go back and overhaul the jib down-haul yourself, and send Tom in his own place," directed the young lady with a decision that showed that she was accustomed to being obeyed.

So the man disappeared again. After which steps were presently heard once more, and then a second person appeared. By a sort of common instinct everybody looked up this time to see if it was "Tom."

This second comer was a youth rather than a man grown. So much could be discerned as he came slowly down, though his face was not distinctly visible. He was dressed in the ordinary, close-fitting sailor's uniform, which set off his square, well-built figure to advantage. He came forward, cap in hand,

with an unwilling air that might well have been taken for diffidence. The next moment, as he came fairly into the light, everybody could recognize him fully. And everybody did. It was Thomas Ruggles!

“Jupiter!” ejaculated Livy, his surprise fairly getting the better of his politeness, though the exclamation was uttered half under-breath. As for our two heroines, whose surprise was of course also very great, Densie stared for a single instant, and then (I am afraid that she must allow me the word) giggled audibly; while Honor, though her heart seemed to give a little leap, uttered not a sound. By a sort of impulse, however, she the next moment laid her hand on Livy’s arm and caught Densie’s eye, in time to prevent anything being said just then. And neither Miss Brandagee nor her brother noticed at all that the entrance of this member of the crew had occasioned any emotion.

Ruggles on his part, showed no surprise whatever, nor indeed, now that he found that there was no avoiding the encounter, any confusion. He caught the look of surprised recognition on three of the faces, and observed and understood Honor’s sudden movement. He stood there quietly and respectfully, awaiting his orders. He seemed to understand his

"place" as a common sailor even better than he had come to know it as a coachman.

"Tom," said young Brandagee, "you were with us when we set father and mother ashore last night. Do you remember what he said about coming off again?"

"Yes, sir," answered Ruggles. "He said they would come down at nine o'clock to-night, at the same wharf, and we were to send a boat for them."

Miss Brandagee clapped her hands.

"Good, Tom," cried she. "You always have things right, and that settles the matter." Then she went on, turning to her company, "I should have been quite willing to have been wrong, though, for it would be pleasant to go on shore with you."

"We can do so, anyway, for an hour or two," declared her brother. "There'll be plenty of wind to-night and it is fair. And there is a moon too. We can run up in a hour easy enough. How is the weather now, Tom?"

"It has stopped raining, and there's blue sky over to the west'ard."

"All right. Tell Captain Stillwater to run in, will you? The wind is steady enough now, I think."

"We've been running in for some time, sir. The shore isn't an eighth of a mile away."

"Is that so!" exclaimed the young man, and all the rest shared his surprise. Then he turned and looked at the clock, while Ruggles seized the opportunity to leave the cabin. "It is only six o'clock now," said he. "We'll go ashore for an hour or two, at any rate. What do you say, Sis?" This to his sister.

"I should like very much to go, if we can get back to New Bedford before nine," said she. "If they came down and found us gone, they would be worried about us, after such a tempest."

"Oh, we will get back by nine o'clock fast enough," said her brother. And then they all went on deck.

The sun was just breaking through the clouds in the west, and the sky was clearing rapidly. The wind was still blowing very fresh, but was now perfectly steady. The water about them seemed to have a bluer, brighter look after the rain, as sometimes woods and fields look greener and fresher. They were close in with the shore now, and a group of friends upon the beach seemed to have recognized them and were waving their handkerchiefs frantically.

Honor, coming on deck, had cast a single glance about her and taken in the whole attractive scene. But she had a purpose in mind at that moment which drove all other thoughts from her. She must see and speak to Ruggles before she left the yacht. She

looked anxiously forward, and saw him, apart by himself, busy in clearing away the anchor chain. And with a determined step she made her way toward the bow of the vessel.

Ruggles saw her coming, and a moment later she found that he had gone out on the bowsprit and was working away with tremendous energy at the stops on one of the jibs. She understood the action, and flushed a little as she saw it; but she was not to be thus deterred.

She went straight on to the very heel of the bowsprit and spoke to him. And of course he had nothing to do now but look up at her and hear what she had to say.

"I have wanted to see you very much since what you did in finding Angus," she began. She spoke in a low tone, so that none but he should hear, and her voice was slightly tremulous. "I wanted to beg your pardon for thinking of you as—as we all know now that you did not deserve. I wanted to thank you for finding Angus for us. You cannot think how grateful we all of us are!"

She stopped speaking and stood with her eyes fixed appealingly upon him. But he on his part was looking down now, and knew only what she was saying.

"I certainly did not deserve the suspicions I was honored with," said he, speaking in a cold, hard way that one could not but blame him for; but he was very proud and he had felt himself deeply wronged. And, moreover, he was angry just now that he had been discovered again, after having taken some pains to put himself out of the way. "But I do not know that I deserve any thanks or gratitude. I only did what any decent fellow would have done."

The tone, so cold and indifferent, and the look with which he now raised his eyes and met her own, more than the words themselves, hardened Honor's heart in spite of her. She felt a sort of indignation at being met in this way. It was very hard for her to go on in the face of it—for she was as proud as he, and not used to self-humiliation; but she had something more to say and she went on to say it.

"Mr. Murdoch is very anxious—we all want very much—that you should come back. We know now—we have discovered—"

She paused again, a good deal embarrassed and not knowing how to express herself. And he, not understanding her at all, and not one bit softened, answered at once:

"I thank you. But I am very well off where I

am. And it would be, as I said, quite impossible for me to go back. It is not to be thought of."

Then all at once the peremptory command of the skipper to "Stand by to let go that anchor for'rd there" was heard. And Ruggles sprang up to make his way in board again. And poor Honor, realizing at once how impossible it was to say anything more now, turned away and walked aft again, with tears of anger and mortification in her eyes.

A few minutes later the shipwrecked party were once more safe on *terra firma*.

CHAPTER XXIII.

DENSIE'S TACTICS.

ARRIVED at the hotel once more, Honor ran up stairs, thoroughly angry with herself and everybody else. To think of her having humbled herself before Ruggles as she had, and then to be treated in this way! She had sincerely begged his pardon for the injustice she had done him, and he had not even had the grace to say that it was granted. A *gentleman* always accepted an apology, she declared to herself with flashing eyes, especially if it came from a lady. Although for that matter, remembering well that evening in the library when Ruggles had turned and faced her with his question, she confessed to herself again that her offence was almost unpardonable. At least, she could see that it might seem so to him. But, apart from that, what had she done now? To-day fate had brought her once more face to face with

Ruggles, and given her the opportunity she had for the last three weeks been longing for. And she had simply thrown the opportunity away. She had not said one word that would lead to a solution of the difficulty as to their real relation to each other. She had not even let him know that she was aware of his actual position. True, there had been really no time to speak as she would have liked. But she might at least have made some appointment with him, or extracted from him some promise that he would see her again or let her know where he might be found. Now, the yacht would sail again in an hour or two, and doubtless Ruggles would disappear once more; and this time he would probably take even better care than before to leave no trace behind. How stupid she had been, not to have had her wits about her, and to let her anger get the better of her! If she could only meet him face to face once more, she was certain she could arrange the matter this time. He *should* hear her! But that was not possible now. At any rate, she would write him a letter — tell him all that she knew, and that he must take back the name and the property, for she would no longer bear the one or touch a penny of the other. But this would not do, either. She knew him well enough now to be sure that anything she could say

to him on paper would make no difference. He would take no notice of it, and would just as surely go off still and leave things just as they were. Oh, if she could only *see* him once more ! She would then have it fairly out with him ; and he should not thus baffle and evade her. She would then tell him distinctly that the property was his and that he must take it ; and if he still persisted in behaving so obstinately and ridiculously, why, she could then throw the responsibility upon *him*, and free herself entirely of the affair.

Thus our much-tried heroine ran on hotly to herself as she hurriedly changed her dress once more before going down to her guests. And the face that met her eyes as she took a last look in the glass was so flushed and disturbed that she was almost afraid to show herself.

They had tea again all by themselves in one corner of the hotel dining-room. Indeed, most of the other people staying there had already been to supper. Mrs. Murdoch and Angus were now added to the company. Much of the conversation, naturally enough, was of the events of the afternoon. Mrs. Murdoch again and again expressed her thankfulness at the fortunate escape of the party, and she could not say enough to show her appreciation of the

service the *Curlew* had been able to render in the matter. As for Angus, he seemed to think that if he had been on board the boat, the accident would never have happened. And he might just as well have been, too; for the tadpoles had not turned into frogs after all. The fact of their having met Ruggles on board the yacht was not mentioned, Honor having privately requested Livy and Densie to say nothing about it just yet.

After tea, while Mrs. Murdoch and Livy were talking with the Brandagees, Honor secured a moment's talk apart with Densie. She quickly told her of her brief interview with Ruggles, and how she feared now that he would be lost sight of again, and nothing at all come of their having thus stumbled upon him.

"And now," said she in real despair, "what shall I do?"

"Do?" returned Densie practically, "why, you must see him again! There can't be any great difficulty about that when he is down here in a yacht not a stone's throw from the shore."

"But *how* shall I see him?" cried Honor anxiously. "Miss Brandagee said at table that they must leave at half-past seven; and it is after seven now. If once he gets away, I am perfectly certain he will not let himself be found again. He is *deter-*

mined to keep out of the way. If you could only have heard the way he spoke to-night!"

"And suppose you do see him again, are you sure you can alter his determination?"

"Yes," said Honor decidedly. "I am sure that I can."

"Very well, leave it all to me. I will arrange it."

And she did arrange it. Densie was a young woman of talent, in certain directions at least, it must be confessed. She was an admirable tactician. A few moments later she had young Brandagee out on the piazza all by himself. She knew that the *Curlew* could not well sail without him, and she meant to keep possession of him if she could.

The two sat there on the steps and talked a few moments, and then Densie proposed a walk.

"Which way?" asked her companion.

"Oh, any way. Over across the meadows yonder. I guess the grass isn't very wet."

But Mr. Brandagee, although he had, I think it quite safe to say, pretty nearly lost his heart to this charming young lady, had still been able to retain possession of his head. He pulled out his watch and looked at it, and then shook his head.

"It won't do," said he rather sadly. "I promised

Sis I'd leave here at half-past seven sure. And it's quarter past now."

"But why need you go just yet?" asked Densie. "Why not wait until by and by—until eleven or twelve o'clock? There'll be a moon almost all night, won't there?"

"Yes; and a breeze too, I reckon. But father is coming down at nine o'clock; and if we are not there, he will have the whole fleet making sail and coming out to find us."

"Oh, that would be splendid!" cried Densie. "Do stay!" And then she continued seriously, "But maybe he did say nine o'clock to-morrow morning after all."

Her companion shook his head again. "No," said he; "Sis and Tom both know that he didn't. Indeed, I know it about as well as they do, myself. Only I *wanted* to have it the other way."

Then they both stood looking off toward the yacht, he with a somewhat melancholy expression, and she with an amused one, as she watched him closely.

"Well," murmured he at length with a loud-drawn sigh,

"My boat is on the shore
And my bark is on the sea,
And before I go, Tom Moore,
I must say farewell to thee."

"Oh, how delightful!" exclaimed Densie. "Do say it again! I do *so* love to have people quote poetry to me!"

"I haven't time," answered young Brandagee looking at his watch again. However much he might feel like saying silly things, he did not feel like being laughed at.

"I don't believe you *care* to stay, really," pouted Densie.

"I do, though!" he declared with great earnestness.

"I'll get up an *impromptu* hop for you if you'll stay."

"I would if I could. Indeed, I would."

"We have elegant *impromptu* hops here. And I'll dance with you every time — no, every other time."

"I would if I could," repeated the poor young man.

"Would you if you could get word to your father?"

"Yes. That is, if I could speak to him directly and get his answer — right away, I mean."

"Would you honestly? Upon your honor?"

"Yes, I certainly would. But what is the use of talking! Of course that is not possible."

"Just come with me a moment," said Densie

triumphantly. "And remember you have promised."

She led the way straight into the office, and taking him across the room, pointed to a telephone.

"There!" said she magnificently; and she struck the bell.

Young Brandagee, who was perfectly familiar with the instrument, at once prepared to enter into conversation with it.

"*Well!*" came sharply to his ears in answer to Densie's ring.

"Connect the N—— Hotel with the P—— House," said he.

There was almost a minute's silence, and then came the answer:

"*Can't get them.*"

"Nonsense!" exclaimed Densie, who was standing close by and could hear these words perfectly well. "Give it to me! We will *see* if they can't get them." And she rang the bell fiercely again, and then a third time.

"*Well!*" came the answer at length. "*Who's there?*"

"*I am here — Miss Densie Drew! I want you to connect this place with the P—— House, and at once too, or I'll know the reason why!*"

This seemed to have the desired effect, for they in a moment got word from the P—— House.

"Is Mr. Brandagee in — or Mrs. Brandagee?" inquired Densie.

"No. *They went away this afternoon. Somebody came for them in a carriage.*"

"Oh, dear!" said Densie to her companion, "what shall we do now? Where can they be? Have you any idea?"

"I don't know, I'm sure, unless they're up at Mr. A——'s, on County street. Try there."

So Densie peremptorily called back the clerk at the central office, and was at once put in communication with Mr. A——'s on County street; and to the great delight of them both, Mr. and Mrs. Brandagee were found to be there, and the former was called to the telephone.

"Hadn't you better let me take it now?" suggested Densie's companion.

"No," said she decidedly. "When I want a thing well done, I always do it myself." Then she called through the telephone to know if that was Mr. Brandagee.

"Yes," came the response at once.

Densie assumed a half-tragic tone as she now poured her request by means of the wondrous little

machine into the very ear of Mr. Brandagee himself.

"Some young people — two young ladies and a young man — were out in a boat this afternoon and were upset by the squall and nearly drowned. I am one of the young ladies. The *Curlew* picked us up, and brought us in here. We want your son and daughter to stay here to-night until after a hop given in their honor. They promise to be back by twelve or one o'clock at the furthest. There's a moon and plenty of wind. Can they stay? We shall be ever so much obliged if you will let them."

Then came the answer:

"Bless my soul! Of course they can stay! Do you say that you are one of the young ladies? Well, be sure you dance as hard as you can all the evening. It will prevent your taking cold after your wetting. Of course they can stay! Mrs. Brandagee and I were once young ourselves."

"There!" exclaimed Densie with great self-satisfaction, as she turned away from the instrument. "Wasn't that pretty well done?"

"Indeed it was!" assented her companion with real admiration. "I'll go and tell Sis about it at once. Or — hold on; I'll write a note to Captain Stillwater first and send it back by the boat."

So he went around to the office desk and wrote a

note to the skipper, telling him of the change of plan. As he was about to fold it, Densie asked him suddenly if she might add a postscript to it.

"Of course, if you want to," was the reply.

"Well — or *you* write it as I dictate. Write this, now — word for word, as I say it." Then she dictated slowly, and he, in great wonder, wrote down the words :

"Send Miss Brandagee's waterproof ashore at once. (Your sister has a waterproof, hasn't she?) Send it by Tom. Tell him to come up to the hotel with it, and he will find the lady all alone by herself at the south end of the hotel piazza. Be sure that you send Tom, but don't let him know I told you to send him."

Then, after having in high glee gone and informed his sister of what their father had said, young Brandagee went down to the boat to send his letter off, while Densie proceeded to get together the young people about the house and to make arrangements for the hop.

CHAPTER XXIV.

VICTOR OR VANQUISHED?

JUST after eight o'clock this same evening, Ruggles was walking back and forth across the forward deck of the *Curlew* as steadily and unwearily as though he were entered for a pedestrian contest against time. One might have imagined that he was moodily thinking over the events of the afternoon. But in point of fact it was something very different that was in his mind. He was repeating to himself, over and over again, the list of Greek prepositions that governed the ablative. Ruggles had shipped on board the yacht because such a berth would give him a chance for study. And he did not mean to waste one moment of time between now and the middle of September.

He was to be interrupted for a while to-night, however, for presently the voice of the skipper summoned him aft.

"You're to go ashore and take this to Miss Brandagee," said he. "Though what she wants of a waterproof such a night as this, I'm blessed if I know. It seems we're not going back to town just yet."

"Can't Andrews take it?" asked Ruggles. "Or one of the other men?"

"Andrews has just been ashore for an hour or more; and I told him he might turn in. The other men are all below already, aren't they? No; I guess you had better go."

"Where shall I find Miss Brandagee? Shall I leave it at the hotel?"

"Yes. She says she'll be waiting for you on the hotel piazza. Go way out to the south end and you'll find her there. It's some woman's whim, I'll be bound." This last in an undertone, as Ruggles took the bundle and turned away.

Our hero got into the boat that lay alongside, and sculled himself rapidly ashore. Then, less in haste as he drew nearer his destination, he walked up the path toward the hotel, which could be plainly distinguished, its lower windows brilliantly lighted. As he approached still nearer, he heard the sound of laughter and music and saw that dancing was going on within. And he thought of another evening, scarcely a month ago, when from the same outer

darkness he had caught sounds and glimpses of just such a scene.

He went up the steps, and turning to the left, walked along past the open windows toward the south end of the piazza, as he had been directed. The piazza ran on a quite a distance beyond the rooms where the lights and dancing were; and at the extreme end, all alone by herself, he saw that a young lady was sitting. She was leaning upon the piazza railing, looking off toward the moonlit bay and apparently enjoying to the full the wondrous beauty of the night. She did not heed his approach until he halted close beside her and held out his package. Then she turned and looked up at him; and he saw that it was not Miss Brandagee, but Honor Bright.

"I beg pardon," he said. "I was told I should find Miss Brandagee here." And he was for turning away again.

She started up and confronted him, half putting out her hand to stop him.

"*Wait!*" she said in her quick, imperious way. And then, conscious of how much depended upon his remaining, and afraid that she had spoken too sharply, she added, more gently:

"I beg of you not to go away just yet. There is something that I *must* say to you. It is rude and un-

gentlemanly in you to act in this way when I try to say it. It is not fair." She spoke bitterly and beseechingly at once. It was hard to have to humble herself in this way; and yet she was so afraid he would refuse to listen.

Her words stung him a little, and he said somewhat more than he meant to in reply.

"I should be sorry to do anything that was rude and ungentlemanly. But, Miss Bright," — he raised his head proudly, — "I was and am your equal, and there were some things that were hard to bear."

"I know it," cried she eagerly. "I know it — know it all now as I did ~~not~~ know it then. We found it all out the day after you were gone — your name and who you really were. We have been searching for you ever since — I have been wishing to see you ever since, that I might tell you of this, and say to you how glad I was that you were alive after all, and to give you back what was yours. You are a gentleman. Then, believe that I am a *lady*, and that I am not capable of keeping for one moment the name and the money that are rightfully yours."

She stopped speaking and stood watching him tremblingly expectant. It was said at last, the thing she had so had it on her mind to say. What would he say to it in reply?

But he did not say anything for a moment. There was no misunderstanding her words; but what she said was entirely unexpected to him and he had to wait and realize it. He was surprised of course, greatly surprised. But that soon passed. He was one who got over his surprises pretty quickly. His disappointment and chagrin at finding his obstinately cherished secret known, was very much greater than his wonder. It was too bad, after all he had done to conceal it! Yet this feeling quickly passed away too; and, strange perhaps to say, there was left in his mind a certain sense of relief and joy, and a firmer resolve than ever to carry out his purpose as to the property. There had been one single point in his scheme that had troubled him all through. He had sometimes been unable quite to feel that Honor Bright was worthy of the sacrifice he meant to make for her. Her words to him now had suddenly removed that difficulty completely. She was ready to make for him some such sacrifice as he would have made for her. At least, she had just shown him that she would gladly give up to him the wealth that she had come to regard as her own and which she could not but value highly. The fact made perfect the dream which he had come to have so at heart. Even further than ever was he now from

any thought of relinquishing that dream. And for any additional obstacles that her knowledge of his real position seemed to bring, he at once set about overcoming them.

"You say you know my name?" he repeated at length, without meaning anything more than to gain a little time.

"Yes; I know that you, and not I, have a right to the name of Honor Bright. And, of course, the estate and the name go together. I am so glad that you came back in time! though, of course, that could have made no difference. I should have given it up to you had you come back twenty years hence."

He stood a moment trying to think how he should put best what he had to say. The statement of his main proposition was very simple, though, and he made it at once with mathematical directness.

"Miss Bright," said he soberly, "the money is yours and you will have to keep it."

She was not unprepared for this, and her answer was immediate:

"Mr. Bright, the money is yours and you must take it."

Her eyes met his as fairly and unflinchingly as her words had met his own. He realized that he had some hard work before him. It was to be an

out-and-out battle between them, and the stronger nature would prevail. Perhaps it was ominous of the final result that, as they thus stood and looked at each other, he was able to endure the silence longest.

"It seems to me a very simple matter," Honor presently went on, a little nervously. "I was to inherit the estate on my eighteenth birthday, provided you did not come back before that."

"I have not come back," said Ruggles dogmatically, "and I do not mean to come back."

"I don't know what you can mean by that," exclaimed Honor impatiently. "You are here now, are you not?"

"Yes; but I do not claim to be Honor Bright. It is you, and not I, who say that."

"Do you deny it?"

"I do not acknowledge it."

"It will be perfectly easy to prove it, at any rate," said Honor positively. She had thought it all over several times, and, woman-like, her own logic seemed to her quite convincing.

"How?" asked Ruggles.

"Well, you had a book with you when you came to Hollownook, with the name *Honor Bright* written in it. I saw it accidentally." The last sentence she added hastily, blushing a little.

"That would hardly prove it," observed Ruggles, carelessly.

"No ; but the handwriting was clearly the same as your signature in an album of Densie's that you wrote in once, when she used to know you."

"Ah !" said Ruggles.

"And then there are the letters on your wrist."

"Would you propose bringing *them* into court, too?" inquired he ironically. "You and Miss Drew seem to be as skilful in these matters as — as Mr. Clewer."

"At any rate," said Honor desperately, "I have no doubt there are plenty of people who used to know you and could identify you now."

"Miss Drew, for example," suggested Ruggles.

"No ; but Mr. Lambert would know you the moment he saw you. He said he should."

"Then I shall take good care that Mr. Lambert does not see me."

"At any rate," said Honor again, "whether it can be proved or not, *I* know it, and I solemnly declare that under no circumstances will I take one penny of the money, or use it in any way."

"You may take it and use it, or not, just as you please," said Ruggles coolly, "but it will be yours just the same. I understand the matter perfectly, I



"I PROMISE," SAID HONOR.

think. The law makes it yours the third day of September, unless I appear before that time. I have not appeared, and I shall not. The property will, in spite of you, stand in your name and be yours by law. And I really do not see how you can get rid of it—unless you give it away, or throw it into the river.”

“Very well, I will give it away, or throw it into the river.”

“Very well, that is no concern of mine that I know of.”

“This is all nonsense,” cried Honor pettishly.

“Then suppose we talk sense,” was the cool rejoinder.

“You know as well as I do,” said Honor, “that Mr. Bright always meant his estate to go to you.”

“Then why did he leave it to you?” returned Ruggles.

“Have you any doubt how he would feel about it this minute if he were here? Would not he give it to you?”

“No,” said Ruggles, “he would not. At least, if he did, he would do a mighty unfair thing. If I had never been away at all and he had given me the property, it would have been all right. But I *have* been away, and you have supposed yourself the heir

all this time and had the use of the income. And I say it would be an outrageous thing in me now to take it away from you! I should feel as if I was stealing it! I went off and gave it up and didn't send any word of myself. I deserve to lose it, and why not let me lose it? Besides, I *don't want* it! Why, look at me!"—He straightened himself unconsciously and held out his big, strong hands.—"*I* don't need any money! I can get my living in a hundred ways, as easy as not. I would *rather* earn my own living. If I had all that property, it would cramp me and spoil me. Maybe I should get to be just such a baby as Livingston Mauran." This was really a little hard on our friend Livy; but Ruggles was talking very fast and earnestly.

"And do you think *I* cannot get along without the money?" demanded Honor proudly.

"No; but I leave it to your common sense if it is not better for you to have it than for me. You are a woman and I am a man. You have always been used to luxury and wealth, while I have been knocked about in the roughest possible way for the last three years. You have a *right* to be rich, in the nature of things; while riches would be a perfect nuisance to me. I tell you plainly, Miss Bright, I won't have 'em *anyway*! Neither you nor anybody else shall force

them on me. I have laid out my future on my own plan, and I propose to live it according to that plan. And I say to you again, as to my uncle's property, that I shall never take it!"

"But you must see that *I* cannot take it either, under such circumstances," said Honor in distressed perplexity. She saw with perfect certainty now that he would never yield, though she had by **no** means gotten so far as to be willing to yield herself.

"Yes, you can," declared he. "Of course, you can! *Somebody* must take it, and it is perfect nonsense to talk about throwing it away. *That* would be carrying out my uncle's wishes with a vengeance. And more than all that, you have *got* to take it, Honor Bright! At least, I have made up my mind to just *this*. And I am sincere in what I say, just so truly as I stand here! You must either promise me distinctly, to-night, that you will do as I say, or I will start for the West again to-morrow morning, and never show myself in this part of the country again so long as I live. I will do it, honestly! And the money may go to Texas! You see how it is. It will only make matters worse for both of us if you refuse. I am quite resolved."

"But cannot something be done better than this? Can't we compromise it in some way?" Honor was

not really aware, even yet, that she meant to yield. But her words were virtually a confession of defeat. He who proposes a compromise will presently come to unconditional surrender. "Why can't we divide it in some way? I might take part and you the rest."

Ruggles shook his head impatiently.

"I will not take a single picayune," said he. "And — excuse me, but I must not stay here any longer. Will you give me the promise, or shall I go back West where I came from? I assure you, I don't want to do it. But I *will* do it, upon my word and honor, if it is only because I have said that I would. Do you promise?"

Honor hesitated still another moment. But it was only now because she hated to say the word that acknowledged her defeat. She was defeated, completely — she who had met him there with no thought that it was possible for her to do this thing, and confident of her power to bend his will to hers. But strong as she had felt herself to be, she had met one now who was stronger; and she knew herself to be conquered. She hesitated a single moment longer, because it was so hard for her to say the word. Then she said it, faintly, but quite distinctly and truly:

"I promise."

She sank down into the chair again and leaned

forward upon the railing, looking away from him down the hillside and out toward the sea. And he stood in silence beside her, reluctant just yet to go, but not knowing why he should stay. The matter that had brought them together was settled at last. He had her promise that it should be as he had said. Was that the end of it all? It was far from being what he on his part wished; but he felt at this moment, waiting there in the silence and the night, that if anything more was ever to pass between them the first farther word must come from her. Victor in this struggle between them though he had been, he felt now that unless she chose to open her lips again, he must in another moment turn away without a word, and that this would be the end of all acquaintance and intercourse between them.

Perhaps too she felt something of this, for she presently did look up and speak.

"And since you are not going West again, what will you do?" she asked, in a voice as natural as she could make it, though it betrayed no little anxiety.

He bent toward her as he answered. He spoke eagerly and rapidly :

"I will tell you," said he. "You have known of self-made men. I would like to be such a one. I mean to work and study and educate myself and

make of myself something that is worth the being. I think I shall succeed. And if I do—by and by I would like to come to you and know you, when I have won a name and fortune of my own. And then—shall I say it—perhaps—perhaps the money and the name may go exactly as my uncle would have had it after all, and yet neither of us give it up. I—I *could* not go away without saying this much, Miss Bright. I do not ask a single word in answer. I only ask you to shake hands with me and say good-by.”

He held out his hand; and hers was laid within it. Then, quite forgetful of Miss Brandagee’s waterproof, which had all this while lain neglected on the piazza floor, he turned abruptly and walked away.

And a long, long while Honor sat there by the railing, looking out upon the dark hillside and the moon-lit bay, with the yacht anchored off the shore and the little boat that pulled swiftly out to it and was soon lost in its shadow. Perhaps, as she sat and gazed dreamily upon the beautiful scene, she saw in fancy something more and further than can be written here of the story of Honor Bright. If so, I am sure they were pleasant visions that were hers, for the moon, shining down so brightly upon her fair face, showed it lit up by a quiet, happy smile.

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